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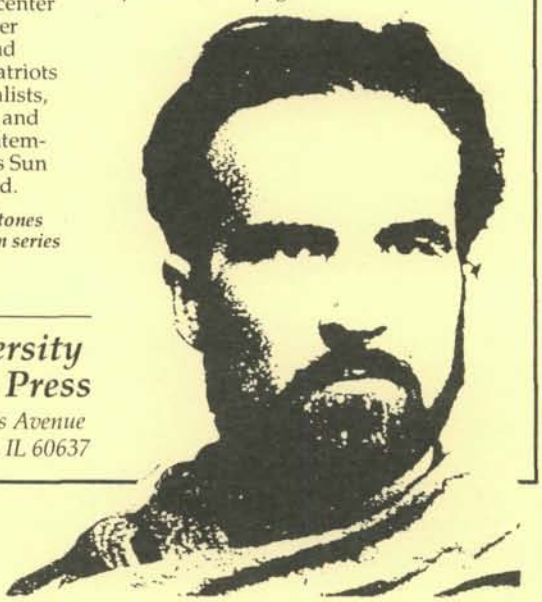

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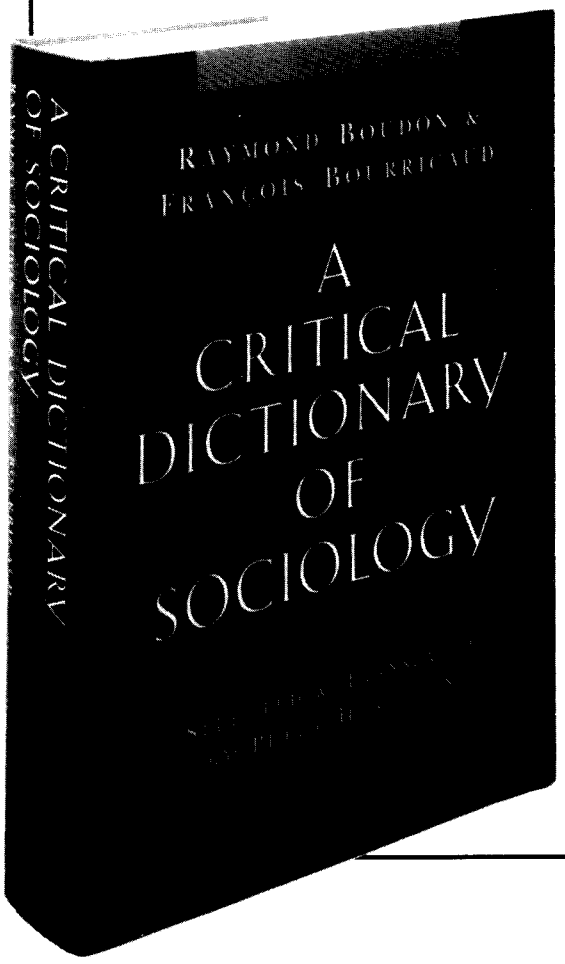

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Money Is Funny

ARISTIDES

"It is funny about money," wrote Gertrude Stein, who thought money "a fascinating subject," adding that it was "really the difference between men and animals," and concluding that "everybody has to make up their mind if money is money or if money isn't money and sooner or later they decide that money is money." For Miss Stein the decision came later rather than sooner, when she was fifty-nine, to be precise, and had achieved a nice little financial score with *The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas,* which she claimed to have written one beautiful autumn in Bilignin in a mere six weeks. With this, her first serious infusion of cash, she bought a new eight-cylinder Ford, a costly made-to-order coat at Hermes, and two studded collars for Basket, her poodle. A few more items were added, such as the telephone she installed in her famous quarters at 27 rue de Fleurus, on which to talk with her literary agent, and two servants, a married couple, where previously there had been one. Miss Stein had made up her mind that money is money all right, and she seems to have enjoyed it hugely and without the least complication.

I knew that money was money quite a bit earlier than did Gertrude Stein. Aided by the instruction of parents whose early maturity was rudely interrupted by the Depression, I grew up with an emphatic sense that money was important—very, very important. I continue to believe in its importance, but not, apparently, with sufficient ardor. Keen though I am for all the swell things money can buy—food and finery and, in some circumstances, even freedom—I am, evidently, not keen enough. Certainly, I have never been able to concentrate for long on ways to acquire it, or to devise other ways to make what little of it I have multiply at an impressive rate. Far from being proud, I am rather embarrassed about my ineptitude with money. A man of many winters, I should by now be initiated into its secrets. I am not only of mature years but Jewish into the bargain, and Jews—consult the longstanding stereotype on this—are supposed to be especially adept with money. That I am not is a shame, really; so long as there is anti-Semitism in the world, I figure I ought at least to show a small profit.

I don't mean to poor-mouth. In fact, my financial condition approximates that of the old gentleman hit by a bus, then laid gently on the sidewalk by bystanders, his tie loosened and head resting on the overcoat of one among them who, while awaiting the arrival of an ambulance, asks him if he is comfortable. "*Comfortable* I don't know," says the old gentleman. "I make a nice living." So do I make a nice living. I make it, moreover, doing almost exactly what I wish to do, which makes me a very lucky fellow indeed, even if I do work 364 days a year (and under the bed on Yom Kippur). Yet, happy in my work though I am, not believing myself generally underpaid, of late I have begun to think myself something of a piker.

It isn't that I earn too little money; it is that so many other people seem to be earning so much more. Immense quantities of the stuff—"long green," as they used to call big money on the fairgrounds—is flowing across the land. A young lawyer fresh out of Harvard Law School may be good for eighty or ninety grand a year; a physician who doesn't turn more than a quarter of a million a year qualifies as an altruist; painters of not even dubious quality ring up obscene sums for their daubings; any professional athlete currently making less than a million a year must view himself as a hopeless mediocrity; movie stars and rock singers I don't even want to discuss. One would not have been able to discuss any of

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this until relatively recently, when salaries and earnings generally became a significant part of the news. The sports pages, I am not the first to remark, today often resemble the financial pages. So, too, do the cultural pages. The clink, the positively deafening roar, of gold pouring into other people's coffers has become more than a little distracting.

Why, though, I ask myself, need I feel at all distracted? A friend recently reported the death of an elderly relative, and mentioned that, along with several other members of his family, he would be in for an inheritance—not a huge but a substantial one. How nice, I thought. Yet I also thought that he and I were at a time of life, middle age, where our habits were so fully formed that only a momentous sum of money could radically change our lives. As for myself, no matter how momentous the sum, I should continue to work at the same things, live in the same place, wear the same clothes (though I might spend more for socks, which have gone up alarmingly in recent years). Perhaps I would travel more, going absolutely first-class, but then I recall that, as it is, I really do not like to be away from my work for much longer than two weeks, so how much traveling would I be likely to do? More and more, in this respect at least, I am beginning to resemble the poet Philip Larkin, who said that he would like to see China only if he could return home that evening.

Is the poverty of my imagination showing? Am I beginning less to resemble Philip Larkin than the man I saw several years ago on a morning television show who had just won one of the first big state lottery jackpots—for $40 million, I think it was—when that kind of story was still national news. The man was Italian, working-class, in his fifties, modest to the point of seeming more embarrassed than happy about his extraordinary good fortune. The television *nudnik* interviewing him asked what he planned to do with all the money that would now be his. "Well," said the man, "I think I'll get a new car." "What kind of car?" asked the *nudnik*. "Well," said the man, "I kinda like the look of these new Buicks." That shook me from my morning torpor. Forty million dollars in the till and this fellow's imagination did not extend beyond a Buick. I hope the car he bought had whitewalls.

"I call people rich," Henry James has a character say in *The Portrait of a Lady*, "when they're able to meet the demands of their own imagination." By this standard the lottery winner in the preceding paragraph didn't need anywhere near $40 million. How much Henry James himself needed is not known; what is known is that he never came close to attaining it. Owing to James's extreme refinement, it is often assumed that he was quite well-off, living perhaps on family money, and well above the vulgar concern of earning his own way. In point of fact, Henry James, unlike so many of the characters in his novels, was compelled to earn his living, and money worries were never for very long off his mind. Throughout his professional life, James operated as a free lance, and usually on a close margin. The greater his financial hopes, the likelier they were to be disappointed. His first royalty statement for the New York Edition of his work, on which he had put in an enormous amount of work, showed author's earnings of $211. When his friend Edith Wharton once informed him that she had bought her costly Panhard touring car with the proceeds from her first novel (*The Valley of Decision*), James replied that he had bought a handbarrow on which to cart guests' luggage with the proceeds from his last novel (*The Wings of the Dove*), adding that "with the proceeds of my next novel I shall have it painted."

Above the ruck in almost every other way, here, in the realm of shekels, Henry James, in his disappointment, joined the large and far from uniformly distinguished fraternity of his fellow writers. "No man but a blockhead ever wrote, except for money," Samuel Johnson famously remarked. But Johnson himself can scarcely be said to have broken the bank with his pen. Perhaps his remark needs to be revised to read that few men who set out to write for money do not wind up feeling like blockheads. Fantasies in the realm of gold are most common among writers. I believe I have had almost all of them myself: fantasies of my books selling at stratospheric prices at auction, to book clubs, to mass-market paperback houses. Accountants must be called in to see that my income is properly deferred so that the government does not take an unseemly bite out of it. I am instructed by obsequious lawyers on tax shelters. My Italian publisher—charming chap, you'd adore him—tells me that he knows of a duplex along the Arno, ownership of which would save me millions

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of lire on my Italian royalties. . . . I could go on, and in my own mind I assure you that I have. But I am brought up by the painful recollection of the likeness of my own condition to that of Max Beerbohm's friend Reggie Turner, who once said that, among his own novels, the truly rare copies were the second editions.

Sometimes I think that very easy money is not meant to fall into my pocket. A few years ago I received a phone call asking me to speak for half an hour before an educational association in Indianapolis. I replied that I was hesitant to do so. I was told that in previous years speakers had included George Plimpton and Art Buchwald. I sniffed long green. "Besides," I added, "my fee is rather high." When asked what I charged for a talk of half an hour, I crossed my fingers, closed my eyes, and said, "Three thousand dollars." "Not," said the man on the other end of the phone, "a problem." Damn, I thought, lowballed myself again; should have asked for five.

Still, three grand was three grand, and not to be gainsaid, sneezed at, or kicked out of bed. I toted up the take at $100 a minute. I wrote out my talk, rehearsed it, and the morning of the "caper," as I thought of it, I felt the exhilaration of a man embarked on a perfect crime. I felt I ought to give the talk in gloves, even though it was spring, so as to leave no fingerprints.

I arrived to find O'Hare Airport even more bedlamic than usual; hazardous weather conditions had for the present canceled flights throughout the Middle West. One, two, three hours went by. Mine was to be the keynote talk at this meeting. I phoned Indianapolis in the hope of reaching my contact there, but he could not be reached. Four, now five hours went by. I returned home. I finally reached my man in Indianapolis that night. I told him what had happened and that I would be willing to give my talk on the following day. Unfortunately, he said, there would be no room on the schedule. "Ahem," said I, clearing my throat to make way for the vulgar subject, "about my fee. . . ." He told me that he was sure some equable arrangement would be made. Equable (like comfortable) I don't know. The final arrangement was that I, rather in the position of a blind date who didn't work out, was sent a check for my cab fare. Easy money.

Allow me to move on to a subject having to do with a lesser sum and much greater emotion. When I was in my early twenties I worked for a small company in the East. Three of us were responsible for putting out the company's product. One of the three was officially the boss, no doubt about that, but there was supposed to be a sense of partnership, all three of us engaged upon a common enterprise. The job entailed long hours and didn't pay very well, yet the work was interesting, and I felt that I was learning a good deal that might pay off in its own way later.

I wasn't on this job long before it became clear that the sense of partnership among the three of us existed only in my mind. Not only was the man in charge eager to exert his authority, and in a way that was unpleasant in so small a shop, but the other man on the job had plainly decided that he was going to do a good bit less than the minimum necessary. Much of the work he didn't do fell to me; I not infrequently found myself working until ten or eleven at night, running odd errands, doing double duty on the purely onerous work that nearly every young person's job requires. Somehow, though, I didn't mind. The work had to be done; I thought myself a team player; what the hell, no big deal, and so forth.

At the end of the year, the man in charge called me in to tell me how much he appreciated all I had done. Without me, he said, the company would have been in serious trouble. My co-worker had proved a great disappointment. He could count on him for nothing, which made his being able to count on me all the more important. And I had come through—splendidly. He wanted me to know that and he wanted me to know, too, that he was grateful. He was giving me a raise of $800; he wished it could be more, for, as he said, I deserved more, but there were severe constraints on the budget.

Roughly a week later I had lunch with the third man in the office. He told me that, if I hadn't guessed it already, he had long been looking for a new job. He had had it with the man in charge, and he had had it with the work, which seemed to him a dead end in every way. "Do you know," he said, "last week I was given a paltry raise of a thousand bucks?"

From the moment the figure of a thousand bucks hit the air, I was, in spirit, out of there. I felt a sucker, a chump, a patsy, a fool. Before the week was out, I, too, began looking for a new job.

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I know a successful salesman who once told me that he didn't mind being made a fool of from time to time. "Keeps me on my toes," he said. This is reminiscent of the educational views of the father of John D. Rockefeller, Sr. "I cheat my boys every time I get a chance," he is reported to have claimed. "I want to make 'em sharp. I trade with the boys and skin 'em. I just beat 'em every chance I get." That's all very well for those who have good business instincts to begin with, but for those of us who do not, being made a fool of is—if I am in any way representative—demoralizing at best; at worst, it is depressing and humiliating. Or so at least it is to me.

I have not been made a fool of often, true enough, but then neither have I much ventured out and thereby given the world many clear shots at me. Although I grew up with what can only be called a commercial background—my father was a salesman, then owned his own small business—sometime in my late adolescence I caught intellectual fire and chose not to enter the financial wars. My father might have said, parodying John Adams, "I must study the market for handkerchiefs, tablecloths, costume jewelry, and imports from Taiwan, so that my son may have the liberty to study Montaigne, Tolstoy, and T. S. Eliot, so that his son (as it turns out) may go happily back into business." Unlike Allen Ginsberg, I have seen the best minds of my generation go to law school, medical school, and take the CPA exam. I was by background scheduled to have gone and done likewise, and probably would have, had I not taken the turn down that bumpy road marked Serious Cultural Pretensions.

The mind is a great wanderer, as one scarcely need tell anyone who owns one, and my own frequently wanders into thoughts—daydreams is perhaps closer to it—about what my life might now be like if I had not taken that turn. Such mental wanderings are most likely to occur to me when I drive along Sheridan Road, outside Chicago, along the lengthy and lush strip of real estate known as the North Shore. Houses on Sheridan Road on the North Shore run from half a million to three or four million dollars in current value. I shall never occupy one, which is fair enough, but might I have done so had I become a lawyer or cardiologist or commodities trader? I see myself driving in a tan Mercedes, on the car phone to my broker, headed to a house I was clever enough to buy fifteen years ago for $125,000 and that is today worth $750,000. I am wearing an Italian suit, a fifty-dollar haircut, a thin gold watch, a gold bracelet, and a tasteful diamond ring on the little finger of my right hand—what a wag I know once called a Sammy Davis, Jr., starter set. I cannot tell you much about my wife, except that she has a terrific tan. My son is away at school at Tufts, my daughter at Taffeta. (If there is a Tufts, why not a Taffeta?) I have season tickets to the Bears games, on the forty-yard line. It's not a bad life.

Mockery perhaps but not complete mockery. I do not despise that man I might so easily have been, and a part of me even admires him. He has a certain mastery of his world, and I am fairly sure that it is more complete than my mastery of my own world. I am impressed, too, by his savvy. He may not have a deep understanding of the nature of money—or even have much curiosity about it—but he knows a lot about the power of money and how to acquire it. One of the oddities of being a man in America—and this may soon apply to women, if it doesn't already—is that, whatever one's other attainments, there remains a nagging touch of doubt if one hasn't also demonstrated one's ability to earn what I think of as serious money. On the other side, if one has imagination, to have earned serious money, even great high mounds of it, does not on its own and alone seem sufficient either. "It's a complex fate being an American," Henry James once said. As the man behind the wheel of that tan Mercedes might reply, "Tell me about it, Hank."

Such money as I have made for the vast most part I have made by grinding it out. I work at three jobs: writer, editor, teacher. Encouraged by an unfortunate self-deception I seem unable to shake, I frequently, to my chagrin, take on still more tasks; the self-deception I refer to is the belief that I am a fast worker. The truth is that I am a pitiably slow worker. (I write this now, but I shall soon enough forget it.) Give me an opportunity for yet more "easy money"—ask me to deliver a lecture for $5,000 or write an article for a dollar a word—and I am sure to be able to find a way to perform the job with an efficiency of a kind that will have me end up, on an hourly basis, making somewhere just under the minimum wage.

On only one occasion can I recall things

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working out delightfully otherwise. The editor of a college reader who wished to reprint an essay of mine, for which he offered a reprint fee of $300, added that he would pay me $600 more if I would write a thousand or so words about some problem connected with the writing of the essay. I told myself I would do so if I could write these thousand-odd words in less than an hour. And so, extraordinarily (for me), I did. I found the feeling of accomplishment gratifying. I was suddenly transformed in my own mind into a $600-an-hour man—up there with certain famous trial lawyers, allergy specialists, group therapists, if not yet with plastic surgeons, network television anchormen and women, and established major-league pitchers. (Orel Hershiser, of the Los Angeles Dodgers, earns $600 a pitch.) True, I could do with four or five such hours a day, every day, but a single hour gave me a taste of real earning power.

The only ways I might become a regular $600-an-hour man, with such unlicensed talent as I possess, is through writing for the movies, or having an amazing run of luck in writing advertising copy, or hitting the best-seller gong by writing a book that no one needs but lots of people might buy. But I fear that it is too late for me to do any of these things. A number of years ago, I met a successful developer in San Diego who told me that, when he arrived on the West Coast after World War II, the opportunities in real estate were such that he made so much money he never had to do anything immoral in his entire business life. My own professional morality has similarly remained intact, but for quite different reasons.

I am no sellout, but then, in order to sell out, you have to have buyers, and I, pathetic truth to tell, never have had any. I am one of those fortunate people the iron of whose integrity has never been put to the fire. Had it been, the iron may have turned out licorice; that is, I am not so sure it would have come through, though now that I think about it, I am less and less certain nowadays about what constitutes coming through. (When I was younger, I knew precisely, one might even say pedantically.) If one had embarked on a career in culture, there were several things one didn't do for money. Corrupters, their fists full of cash, were felt to be everywhere. Long before I came on the scene, Edmund Wilson proclaimed that the two great destroyers of talent in America were Hollywood and Henry Luce, publisher of *Time*, *Life*, *Fortune*, and other publications that swallowed potential artists and spat them out mere journalists. But then writing for *The New Yorker*, or any of the so-called "slicks," was considered selling out, at any rate among the intellectual monks with whom I hung out. If not outright poverty, then a genuine absence of interest in wealth was felt to be an assumed vow for anyone who had taken up the life of art or intellect. Not only young purists like yours truly believed this, but ring-wise, squinty-eyed realists felt there was something to it. Orwell, for example, wrote: "Serious writers, I should say, are on the whole more vain and self-centered than journalists, though less interested in money."

That there are some things writers and other artists ought not to do for money is apparently a fresh notion to the current generation of the young. More than once, when teaching a course in the sociology of literature to undergraduates, I have brought up for discussion an ad that appeared in *The New Yorker* in which, alongside a line drawing of John Cheever—who was then alive and had to have given his permission for the ad—there ran a paragraph of high-sheen ad copy likening the craftsmanship of a Cheever story to that which goes into the making of a Rolex watch. What, I have asked, is wrong with this advertisement? Not much, feel the students, all of whom have been in the class by dint of their aspirations to be poets or novelists. Freud said that the artist gives up fame, money, and the love of beautiful women for the sake of his art, through which he hopes to win—you guessed her, friend—fame, money, and the love of beautiful women. But I rather doubt that my students have Freud in mind when they feel that any artist is entitled to turn a buck any which way he can. I make the point that writers, working with words, have a responsibility not to allow their names to be linked with the insubstantial words of a glossy ad. But I don't think I have ever successfully sold this point; I think that when I have tried to make it, students think me kind of a quaint old guy, nice enough and not entirely stupid, but maybe a touch wacky.

Attitudes toward money seem to change with every generation. Certainly, the numbers, the sums, change, and one of the signs of becoming older is that one is almost perpetually shocked by the increased cost of things.

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"My mother was amazed to learn," a friend recently reported, "that I paid more for my car than she paid for her house." The numbers of one's early adulthood set one's expectations, and, later, a slight shock comes at having them jarred. In my early adulthood, for example, a good shirt (at Brooks Bros.) cost $7.50, a suit (at the same place) was less than $100, $10 bought an excellent dinner, and $30,000 an impressive house, corner lot. I remember thinking, when in my middle twenties, that if only I could get my salary up to $10,000 a year I could breathe more easily.

I am often surprised at current prices, but people in the generation before mine tend to be frankly astonished by them. They simply cannot comprehend how anyone would pay, say, $1,800-a-month rent for a small and rather shabby apartment in a good neighborhood in San Francisco, or $270 for dinner for two in Manhattan, or $900 for a raincoat. And now that I have written out these prices, I realize that, though I can comprehend them, I nonetheless find them appalling. They give off bad vibrations, they feel wrong, they are in some fundamental way in bad taste. More than appalling, I find them, somehow, immoral. No matter how much money one has, to spend it thus is in some sense to destroy it. As a minor character in *The Mansion*, the last novel in Faulkner's Snopes trilogy, puts it, in a passage that has stuck in my mind more than twenty-five years after I first read it: "Only the gauche, the illiterate, the frightened and the pastless destroy money."

Although I have a taste for nearly every luxury going, I find my appetite for the good high life often curtailed by my monetary morality. Some things it sorely pains me to spend money on—frequently very small things. In Jerusalem recently, I wished to read Josephus's *The Jewish War*, which I had never read, and what better place to read it than at the scene of the subject! But at bookshops in Jerusalem they asked the equivalent of $15 for the Penguin edition that in the United States sells for $7.95. I could not bring myself to buy it. At our very comfortable and otherwise reasonable lodgings, the laundry service wanted $1.15 to do a handkerchief and the same price for a pair of socks. I washed out my own handkerchiefs and socks. I know a man who gives away tens of thousands of dollars to students, friends in need, and good causes from which he gains no personal renown, but who will not order a glass of wine in a restaurant—no matter who is paying—because the price is at least double and usually triple what the same wine costs in a shop, and he feels this is wrong. I quite understand; a peccadillo would be entailed. Money, being funny, is filled with such peccadilloes.

At the same time that I have grown morally sniffy about what seem to me vulgar expenses, I also happen to admire enormously the type once known as the "sport." I have never walked into a bar and said, "Drinks for everyone—on me," or been in a bar when someone else said it. But I do like a man who picks up a check, and I hope that in my time I have picked up my share. A friend once complimented me on a necktie I was wearing, and I straightaway slipped it off, saying, "It's yours." Once, in a barbershop, a stranger said he liked my shirt; I told him his was damn fine, too; and since we happened to be roughly the same size, we exchanged shirts then and there—close but not quite the same as giving the man the shirt off my back. I contribute modest sums to charities and to cultural institutions—music festivals, classical music radio stations, public television, poetry associations—which gives me the illusion that I am a largehearted guy. But whenever I begin to think this, I am reminded that the true measure of generosity is not how much one gives but how much, after giving, one has left over.

If no true sport, certainly not in any grand sense, I qualify, I hope, as generous; I would even settle for the syntactically awkward "not ungenerous." It would pain me to have myself thought cheap, tight, a skinflint, a man from whose wallet moths have been known to emerge. Literature is full of misers, life of cheapskates. Thrift is a virtue, but I knew a man so careful with money that he was able to put something by when living on unemployment insurance, and did it, what is more, living in New York City. Cheapness is sometimes amusing, but more often it is contemptible. Putting too great a value on money is the sign of a dull mind and, possibly, a shriveled heart, or so one would be inclined to think. Yet who knows what dreams of security, independence, love, glory, and fear lurk in the mind of the true tightwad. "Money is human happiness *in abstracto*," wrote the beetle-browed Schopenhauer; "consequently he who is no longer capable of happiness *in concreto* sets his whole heart on money."

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Only the deeply religious and the wildly insane are above the influence of money. Culture does not generally lift one above it; and Freud, in the paper titled "Further Recommendations in the Technique of Psycho-Analysis," maintained that the psychoanalyst ought to understand "that money questions will be treated by cultured people in the same manner as sexual matters, with the same inconsistency, prudishness, and hypocrisy." Written in 1913, that still seems largely true, except that nowadays people do talk a great deal about money. Not to mention money in any connection was once thought a sign of good suburban breeding. It may be that people currently talk about it too much. Again, as with sex, so with money—it remains a subject about which there remains a distinct curiosity. *New York*, a magazine never noted for its delicacy, used to publish the salaries of prominent people, and my guess is that this was probably as widely read as anything in its pages. I would be greatly offended to have my own earnings made public in this or any other way. Several years ago, to accept an honorific place in a small government agency, I had to undergo a security clearance and to set out my earnings and financial holdings. I didn't so much mind the FBI asking friends and colleagues in the various cities I have lived and worked in if I had a drinking or drug problem, but I did find that it badly bugged me to list my earnings and financial holdings for strangers. Prudishness, if that is what it was, may not yet be dead in money matters.

Two conditions lead one to think about money almost endlessly: having none and having an immensity of it. Falling well in the middle ought to put one in a position to achieve the golden mean, or so one might think. But it usually doesn't. (That this Aristotelian concept should be expressed in the universal currency of gold is itself interesting; a silver mean, clearly, wouldn't do the job.) A cool perspective on money is almost never easily achieved. When I was young and made the quite conscious decision not to go for the dough, in my most financially strapped days I felt that when one didn't have to worry about money, one had enough. I don't worry about it all that much anymore, but I continue to think about it. What I mostly think about is what my life might have been like if I had had a great deal more.

If I were to have had any more money, it would not, I think, have been a good thing for me to have had it young. I would have found a way to screw it up, blow it, possibly turn my good fortune into a felony. A neighbor not long ago told me that her husband was one of eighteen nephews and nieces of a man who at his death left a trust that gave them, when they turned twenty-one, an annual income of $60,000 each. Apart from her husband, who went on to medical school, not one of these legatees finished college. The result of their uncle's generous benefaction was to breed a set of drug addicts, full-time beach bums, ne'er-do-wells, and other human disasters. Listening to my neighbor's story, I could not help but imagine what I would be like today if I had had a trust of that kind. Had I been able to depend upon such an income from the age of twenty-one, I should now, at the age of fifty-three, probably be in shorts on the porch of my house in Majorca, putting the finishing touches on my first, quite unpublishable novel.

Although it was something I disdained when young, money, the brute fact is, was then a powerful and even useful goad to me. I wrote not alone for pleasure and out of vanity, but under economic necessity. I had a terrific "nut," as small businessmen used to refer to their overhead, and I needed the green to maintain it. Today I would write what I write for nothing, but getting paid for it makes it all the jollier, even if the sums involved do not send me scurrying for tax shelter. Even a small fee—something, say, in the high two figures—is better than none. "It's not the principle of the thing," a retired businessman I know who was especially insistent on collecting debts owed him used to say, "it's the money."

Money has its own reality, and justice in its distribution does not seem to be a part of it. Sometimes remuneration seems logical and fair; but in an economy that appears to be on goofy pills, often it does not. I was discussing with a friend the salary of an inept fellow worker who, in a strange conjunction of economic facts, makes way more than he deserves, which gives him less than he needs to live on. Above all, one must never expect even the roughest justice in connection with money and skill or money and the importance of a particular job to society. Besides, opinions differ on what work is important to society.

I once told a conservative economist the joke about the airplane that is in grave trouble

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and, overweighted, will crash unless one passenger agrees to jump out. The pilot and the crew have decided that they must ask that person among the passengers to leave who is of the least importance to society. At which point, the punch line of the joke goes, a disc jockey and a used-car salesman got up in the aisle and began fighting. "I would like that joke better," said the economist, "if, instead of a disc jockey and a used-car salesman, a psychologist and the curator of a museum of contemporary art got up in the aisle and began fighting."

One's outlook on money is likely to be greatly conditioned, if not altogether determined, by whether or not one grew up with much of the stuff. Growing up without money can make one eager, even anxious, to acquire as much of it as possible, though it can, conversely, cause one to disbelieve in one's chances of earning much of it and so render one content to live modestly. Growing up with a great deal of money can cause one to lose interest in it—if one is political minded, even to feel guilty about it—though it can also make one wish to outdo one's parents and so be all the more furious in pursuit of it. I grew up with enough money to feel fairly secure about it, but never so secure as to be oblivious about it or its importance. All I want now, I suppose, is lots of money without having to give any thought or specific effort to getting it. Why do I feel that this isn't going to happen?

It might have something to do with the fact that my imagination has begun to shrink. I want only not to have to worry about money, from either side of the tracks, rich or poor. Great wealth would be an inconvenience, at least it would be for me, for I have no wish to think about the stock market, the prime rate, or any of the rest of it. I have no use for a limousine, live-in servants, or even a secretary. I don't say, with the old song, give me the simple life, which, even if it were available, would probably bore me blue. Yet the life I live, which requires purchasing things to sit upon, wear, and eat—not to speak of various tickets and books and a chance to get out of town every once in a while—does not permit my ignoring money for very long. Like the lady said, money is funny, and the biggest laugh may be reserved for those of us who are clownish enough to believe we can rise above it.

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Multiculturalism

E Pluribus Plures

DIANE RAVITCH

QUESTIONS OF RACE, ETHNICITY, AND RELIGION have been a perennial source of conflict in American education. The schools have often attracted the zealous attention of those who wish to influence the future, as well as those who wish to change the way we view the past. In our history, the schools have been not only an institution in which to teach young people skills and knowledge, but an arena where interest groups fight to preserve their values, or to revise the judgments of history, or to bring about fundamental social change. In the nineteenth century, Protestants and Catholics battled over which version of the Bible should be used in school, or whether the Bible should be used at all. In recent decades, bitter racial disputes—provoked by policies of racial segregation and discrimination—have generated turmoil in the streets and in the schools. The secularization of the schools during the past century has prompted attacks on the curricula and textbooks and library books by fundamentalist Christians, who object to whatever challenges their faith-based views of history, literature, and science.

Given the diversity of American society, it has been impossible to insulate the schools from pressures that result from differences and tensions among groups. When people differ about basic values, sooner or later those disagreements turn up in battles about how schools are organized or what the schools should teach. Sometimes these battles remove a terrible injustice, like racial segregation. Sometimes, however, interest groups politicize the curriculum and attempt to impose their views on teachers, school officials, and textbook publishers. Across the country, even now, interest groups are pressuring local school boards to remove myths and fables and other imaginative literature from children's readers and to inject the teaching of creationism in biology. When groups cross the line into extremism, advancing their own agenda

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without regard to reason or to others, they threaten public education itself, making it difficult to teach any issues honestly and making the entire curriculum vulnerable to political campaigns.

For many years, the public schools attempted to neutralize controversies over race, religion, and ethnicity by ignoring them. Educators believed, or hoped, that the schools could remain outside politics; this was, of course, a vain hope since the schools were pursuing policies based on race, religion, and ethnicity. Nonetheless, such divisive questions were usually excluded from the curriculum. The textbooks minimized problems among groups and taught a sanitized version of history. Race, religion, and ethnicity were presented as minor elements in the American saga; slavery was treated as an episode, immigration as a sidebar, and women were largely absent. The textbooks concentrated on presidents, wars, national politics, and issues of state. An occasional "great black" or "great woman" received mention, but the main narrative paid little attention to minority groups and women.

With the ethnic revival of the 1960s, this approach to the teaching of history came under fire, because the history of national leaders—virtually all of whom were white, Anglo-Saxon, and male—ignored the place in American history of those who were none of the above. The traditional history of elites had been complemented by an assimilationist view of American society, which presumed that everyone in the American melting pot would eventually lose or abandon those ethnic characteristics that distinguished them from mainstream Americans. The ethnic revival demonstrated that many groups did not want to be assimilated or melted. Ethnic studies programs popped up on campuses to teach not only that "black is beautiful," but also that every other variety of ethnicity is "beautiful" as well; everyone who had "roots" began to look for them so that they too could recover that ancestral part of themselves that had not been homogenized.

As ethnicity became an accepted subject for study in the late 1960s, textbooks were assailed for their failure to portray blacks accurately; within a few years, the textbooks in wide use were carefully screened to eliminate bias against minority groups and women. At the same time, new scholarship about the history of women, blacks, and various ethnic minorities found its way into the textbooks. At first, the multicultural content was awkwardly incorporated as little boxes on the side of the main narrative. Then some of the new social historians (like Stephan Thernstrom, Mary Beth Norton, Gary Nash, Winthrop Jordan, and Leon Litwack) themselves wrote textbooks, and the main narrative itself began to reflect a broadened historical understanding of race, ethnicity, and class in the American past. Consequently, today's history textbooks routinely incorporate the experiences of women, blacks, American Indians, and various immigrant groups.

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Although most high school textbooks are deeply unsatisfactory (they still largely neglect religion, they are too long, too encyclopedic, too superficial, and lacking in narrative flow), they are far more sensitive to pluralism than their predecessors. For example, the latest edition of Todd and Curti's *Triumph of the American Nation,* the most popular high school history text, has significantly increased its coverage of blacks in America, including profiles of Phillis Wheatley, the poet; James Armistead, a revolutionary war spy for Lafayette; Benjamin Banneker, a self-taught scientist and mathematician; Hiram Revels, the first black to serve in the Congress; and Ida B. Wells-Barnett, a tireless crusader against lynching and racism. Even better as a textbook treatment is Jordan and Litwack's *The United States,* which skillfully synthesizes the historical experiences of blacks, Indians, immigrants, women, and other groups into the mainstream of American social and political history. The latest generation of textbooks bluntly acknowledges the racism of the past, describing the struggle for equality by racial minorities while identifying individuals who achieved success as political leaders, doctors, lawyers, scholars, entrepreneurs, teachers, and scientists.

As a result of the political and social changes of recent decades, cultural pluralism is now generally recognized as an organizing principle of this society. In contrast to the idea of the melting pot, which promised to erase ethnic and group differences, children now learn that variety is the spice of life. They learn that America has provided a haven for many different groups and has allowed them to maintain their cultural heritage or to assimilate, or—as is often the case—to do both; the choice is theirs, not the state's. They learn that cultural pluralism is one of the norms of a free society; that differences among groups are a national resource rather than a problem to be solved. Indeed, the unique feature of the United States is that its common culture has been formed by the interaction of its subsidiary cultures. It is a culture that has been influenced over time by immigrants, American Indians, Africans (slave and free) and by their descendants. American music, art, literature, language, food, clothing, sports, holidays, and customs all show the effects of the commingling of diverse cultures in one nation. Paradoxical though it may seem, the United States has a common culture that is multicultural.

Our schools and our institutions of higher learning have in recent years begun to embrace what Catherine R. Stimpson of Rutgers University has called "cultural democracy," a recognition that we must listen to a "diversity of voices" in order to understand our culture, past and present. This understanding of the pluralistic nature of American culture has taken a long time to forge. It is based on sound scholarship and has led to major revisions in what children are taught and what they read in

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school. The new history is—indeed, must be—a warts-and-all history; it demands an unflinching examination of racism and discrimination in our history. Making these changes is difficult, raises tempers, and ignites controversies, but gives a more interesting and accurate account of American history. Accomplishing these changes is valuable, because there is also a useful lesson for the rest of the world in America's relatively successful experience as a pluralistic society. Throughout human history, the clash of different cultures, races, ethnic groups, and religions has often been the cause of bitter hatred, civil conflict, and international war. The ethnic tensions that now are tearing apart Lebanon, Sri Lanka, Kashmir, and various republics of the Soviet Union remind us of the costs of unfettered group rivalry. Thus, it is a matter of more than domestic importance that we closely examine and try to understand that part of our national history in which different groups competed, fought, suffered, but ultimately learned to live together in relative peace and even achieved a sense of common nationhood.

Alas, these painstaking efforts to expand the understanding of American culture into a richer and more varied tapestry have taken a new turn, and not for the better. Almost any idea, carried to its extreme, can be made pernicious, and this is what is happening now to multiculturalism. Today, pluralistic multiculturalism must contend with a new, particularistic multiculturalism. The pluralists seek a richer common culture; the particularists insist that no common culture is possible or desirable. The new particularism is entering the curriculum in a number of school systems across the country. Advocates of particularism propose an ethnocentric curriculum to raise the self-esteem and academic achievement of children from racial and ethnic minority backgrounds. Without any evidence, they claim that children from minority backgrounds will do well in school *only* if they are immersed in a positive, prideful version of their ancestral culture. If children are of, for example, Fredonian ancestry, they must hear that Fredonians were important in mathematics, science, history, and literature. If they learn about great Fredonians and if their studies use Fredonian examples and Fredonian concepts, they will do well in school. If they do not, they will have low self-esteem and will do badly.

At first glance, this appears akin to the celebratory activities associated with Black History Month or Women's History Month, when schoolchildren learn about the achievements of blacks and women. But the point of those celebrations is to demonstrate that neither race nor gender is an obstacle to high achievement. They teach all children that everyone, regardless of their race, religion, gender, ethnicity, or family origin, can achieve self-fulfillment, honor, and dignity in society if they aim high and work hard.

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By contrast, the particularistic version of multiculturalism is unabashedly filiopietistic and deterministic. It teaches children that their identity is determined by their "cultural genes." That something in their blood or their race memory or their cultural DNA defines who they are and what they may achieve. That the culture in which they live is not their own culture, even though they were born here. That American culture is "Eurocentric," and therefore hostile to anyone whose ancestors are not European. Perhaps the most invidious implication of particularism is that racial and ethnic minorities are not and should not try to be part of American culture; it implies that American culture belongs only to those who are white and European; it implies that those who are neither white nor European are alienated from American culture by virtue of their race or ethnicity; it implies that the only culture they do belong to or can ever belong to is the culture of their ancestors, even if their families have lived in this country for generations.

The war on so-called Eurocentrism is intended to foster self-esteem among those who are not of European descent. But how, in fact, is self-esteem developed? How is the sense of one's own possibilities, one's potential choices, developed? Certainly, the school curriculum plays a relatively small role as compared to the influence of family, community, mass media, and society. But to the extent that curriculum influences what children think of themselves, it should encourage children of all racial and ethnic groups to believe that they are part of this society and that they should develop their talents and minds to the fullest. It is enormously inspiring, for example, to learn about men and women from diverse backgrounds who overcame poverty, discrimination, physical handicaps, and other obstacles to achieve success in a variety of fields. Behind every such biography of accomplishment is a story of heroism, perseverance, and self-discipline. Learning these stories will encourage a healthy spirit of pluralism, of mutual respect, and of self-respect among children of different backgrounds. The children of American society today will live their lives in a racially and culturally diverse nation, and their education should prepare them to do so.

The pluralist approach to multiculturalism promotes a broader interpretation of the common American culture and seeks due recognition for the ways that the nation's many racial, ethnic, and cultural groups have transformed the national culture. The pluralists say, in effect, "American culture belongs to us, all of us; the U.S. is us, and we remake it in every generation." But particularists have no interest in extending or revising American culture; indeed, they deny that a common culture exists. Particularists reject any accommodation among groups, any interactions that blur the distinct lines between them. The brand of history that they espouse is one in which everyone is either a descendant of victims or

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oppressors. By doing so, ancient hatreds are fanned and recreated in each new generation. Particularism has its intellectual roots in the ideology of ethnic separatism and in the black nationalist movement. In the particularist analysis, the nation has five cultures: African American, Asian American, European American, Latino/Hispanic, and Native American. The huge cultural, historical, religious, and linguistic differences within these categories are ignored, as is the considerable intermarriage among these groups, as are the linkages (like gender, class, sexual orientation, and religion) that cut across these five groups. No serious scholar would claim that all Europeans and white Americans are part of the same culture, or that all Asians are part of the same culture, or that all people of Latin-American descent are of the same culture, or that all people of African descent are of the same culture. Any categorization this broad is essentially meaningless and useless.

Several districts—including Detroit, Atlanta, and Washington, D.C.—are developing an Afrocentric curriculum. *Afrocentricity* has been described in a book of the same name by Molefi Kete Asante of Temple University. The Afrocentric curriculum puts Africa at the center of the student's universe. African Americans must "move away from an [*sic*] Eurocentric framework" because "it is difficult to create freely when you use someone else's motifs, styles, images, and perspectives." Because they are not Africans, "white teachers cannot inspire in our children the visions necessary for them to overcome limitations." Asante recommends that African Americans choose an African name (as he did), reject European dress, embrace African religion (not Islam or Christianity) and love "their own" culture. He scorns the idea of universality as a form of Eurocentric arrogance. The Eurocentrist, he says, thinks of Beethoven or Bach as classical, but the Afrocentrist thinks of Ellington or Coltrane as classical; the Eurocentrist lauds Shakespeare or Twain, while the Afrocentrist prefers Baraka, Shange, or Abiola. Asante is critical of black artists like Arthur Mitchell and Alvin Ailey who ignore Afrocentricity. Likewise, he speaks contemptuously of a group of black university students who spurned the Afrocentrism of the local Black Student Union and formed an organization called Inter-race: "Such madness is the direct consequence of self-hatred, obligatory attitudes, false assumptions about society, and stupidity."

The conflict between pluralism and particularism turns on the issue of universalism. Professor Asante warns his readers against the lure of universalism: "Do not be captured by a sense of universality given to you by the Eurocentric viewpoint; such a viewpoint is contradictory to your own ultimate reality." He insists that there is no alternative to Eurocentrism, Afrocentrism, and other ethnocentrisms. In contrast, the pluralist says, with the Roman playwright Terence, "I am a man: nothing

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human is alien to me." A contemporary Terence would say "I am a person" or might be a woman, but the point remains the same: You don't have to be black to love Zora Neale Hurston's fiction or Langston Hughes's poetry or Duke Ellington's music. In a pluralist curriculum, we expect children to learn a broad and humane culture, to learn about the ideas and art and animating spirit of many cultures. We expect that children, whatever their color, will be inspired by the courage of people like Helen Keller, Vaclav Havel, Harriet Tubman, and Feng Lizhe. We expect that their response to literature will be determined by the ideas and images it evokes, not by the skin color of the writer. But particularists insist that children can learn only from the experiences of people from the same race.

Particularism is a bad idea whose time has come. It is also a fashion spreading like wildfire through the education system, actively promoted by organizations and individuals with a political and professional interest in strengthening ethnic power bases in the university, in the education profession, and in society itself. One can scarcely pick up an educational journal without learning about a school district that is converting to an ethnocentric curriculum in an attempt to give "self-esteem" to children from racial minorities. A state-funded project in a Sacramento high school is teaching young black males to think like Africans and to develop the "African Mind Model Technique," in order to free themselves of the racism of American culture. A popular black rap singer, KRS-One, complained in an op-ed article in the *New York Times* that the schools should be teaching blacks about their cultural heritage, instead of trying to make everyone Americans. "It's like trying to teach a dog to be a cat," he wrote. KRS-One railed about having to learn about Thomas Jefferson and the Civil War, which had nothing to do (he said) with black history.

Pluralism can easily be transformed into particularism, as may be seen in the potential uses in the classroom of the Mayan contribution to mathematics. The Mayan example was popularized in a movie called *Stand and Deliver*, about a charismatic Bolivian-born mathematics teacher in Los Angeles who inspired his students (who are Hispanic) to learn calculus. He told them that their ancestors invented the concept of zero; but that wasn't all he did. He used imagination to put across mathematical concepts. He required them to do homework and to go to school on Saturdays and during the Christmas holidays, so that they might pass the Advanced Placement mathematics examination for college entry. The teacher's reference to the Mayans' mathematical genius was a valid instructional device: It was an attention-getter and would have interested even students who were not Hispanic. But the Mayan example would have had little effect without the teacher's insistence that the class study hard for a difficult examination.

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Ethnic educators have seized upon the Mayan contribution to mathematics as the key to simultaneously boosting the ethnic pride of Hispanic children and attacking Eurocentrism. One proposal claims that Mexican-American children will be attracted to science and mathematics if they study Mayan mathematics, the Mayan calendar, and Mayan astronomy. Children in primary grades are to be taught that the Mayans were first to discover the zero and that Europeans learned it long afterwards from the Arabs, who had learned it in India. This will help them see that Europeans were latecomers in the discovery of great ideas. Botany is to be learned by study of the agricultural techniques of the Aztecs, a subject of somewhat limited relevance to children in urban areas. Furthermore, "ethnobotanical" classifications of plants are to be substituted for the Eurocentric Linnaean system. At first glance, it may seem curious that Hispanic children are deemed to have no cultural affinity with Spain; but to acknowledge the cultural tie would confuse the ideological assault on Eurocentrism.

This proposal suggests some questions: Is there any evidence that the teaching of "culturally relevant" science and mathematics will draw Mexican-American children to the study of these subjects? Will Mexican-American children lose interest or self-esteem if they discover that their ancestors were Aztecs or Spaniards, rather than Mayans? Are children who learn in this way prepared to study the science and mathematics that are taught in American colleges and universities and that are needed for advanced study in these fields? Are they even prepared to study the science and mathematics taught in *Mexican* universities? If the class is half Mexican-American and half something else, will only the Mexican-American children study in a Mayan and Aztec mode or will all the children? But shouldn't all children study what is culturally relevant for them? How will we train teachers who have command of so many different systems of mathematics and science?

The efficacy of particularist proposals seems to be less important to their sponsors than their value as ideological weapons with which to criticize existing disciplines for their alleged Eurocentric bias. In a recent article titled "The Ethnocentric Basis of Social Science Knowledge Production" in the *Review of Research in Education*, John Stanfield of Yale University argues that neither social science nor science are objective studies, that both instead are "Euro-American" knowledge systems which reproduce "hegemonic racial domination." The claim that science and reason are somehow superior to magic and witchcraft, he writes, is the product of Euro-American ethnocentrism. According to Stanfield, current fears about the misuse of science (for instance, "the nuclear arms race, global pollution") and "the power-plays of Third World nations (the Arab oil boycott and the American-Iranian hostage

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crisis) have made Western people more aware of nonscientific cognitive styles. These last events are beginning to demonstrate politically that which has begun to be understood in intellectual circles: namely, that modes of social knowledge such as theology, science, and magic are different, not inferior or superior. They represent different ways of perceiving, defining, and organizing knowledge of life experiences." One wonders: If Professor Stanfield broke his leg, would he go to a theologian, a doctor, or a magician?

Every field of study, it seems, has been tainted by Eurocentrism, which was defined by a professor at Manchester University, George Ghevarughese Joseph, in *Race and Class* in 1987, as "intellectual racism." Professor Joseph argues that the history of science and technology—and in particular, of mathematics—in non-European societies was distorted by racist Europeans who wanted to establish the dominance of European forms of knowledge. The racists, he writes, traditionally traced mathematics to the Greeks, then claimed that it reached its full development in Europe. These are simply Eurocentric myths to sustain an "imperialist/racist ideology," says Professor Joseph, since mathematics was found in Egypt, Babylonia, Mesopotamia, and India long before the Greeks were supposed to have developed it. Professor Joseph points out too that Arab scientists should be credited with major discoveries traditionally attributed to William Harvey, Isaac Newton, Charles Darwin, and Sir Francis Bacon. But he is not concerned only to argue historical issues; his purpose is to bring all of these different mathematical traditions into the school classroom so that children might study, for example, "traditional African designs, Indian *rangoli* patterns and Islamic art" and "the language and counting systems found across the world."

This interesting proposal to teach ethnomathematics comes at a time when American mathematics educators are trying to overhaul present practices, because of the poor performance of American children on national and international assessments. Mathematics educators are attempting to change the teaching of their subject so that children can see its uses in everyday life. There would seem to be an incipient conflict between those who want to introduce real-life applications of mathematics and those who want to teach the mathematical systems used by ancient cultures. I suspect that most mathematics teachers would enjoy doing a bit of both, if there were time or student interest. But any widespread movement to replace modern mathematics with ancient ethnic mathematics runs the risk of disaster in a field that is struggling to update existing curricula. If, as seems likely, ancient mathematics is taught mainly to minority children, the gap between them and middle-class white children is apt to grow. It is worth noting that children in

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Korea, who score highest in mathematics on international assessments, do not study ancient Korean mathematics.

Particularism is akin to cultural Lysenkoism, for it takes as its premise the spurious notion that cultural traits are inherited. It implies a dubious, dangerous form of cultural predestination. Children are taught that if their ancestors could do it, so could they. But what happens if a child is from a cultural group that made no significant contribution to science or mathematics? Does this mean that children from that background must find a culturally appropriate field in which to strive? How does a teacher find the right cultural buttons for children of mixed heritage? And how in the world will teachers use this technique when the children in their classes are drawn from many different cultures, as is usually the case? By the time that every culture gets its due, there may be no time left to teach the subject itself. This explosion of filiopietism (which, we should remember, comes from adults, not from students) is reminiscent of the period some years ago when the Russians claimed that they had invented everything first; as we now know, this nationalistic braggadocio did little for their self-esteem and nothing for their economic development. We might reflect, too, on how little social prestige has been accorded in this country to immigrants from Greece and Italy, even though the achievements of their ancestors were at the heart of the classical curriculum.

Filiopietism and ethnic boosterism lead to all sorts of odd practices. In New York State, for example, the curriculum guide for eleventh grade American history lists three "foundations" for the United States Constitution, as follows:

A. Foundations

1. 17th and 18th century Enlightenment thought
2. Haudenosaunee political system
   a. Influence upon colonial leadership and European intellectuals (Locke, Montesquieu, Voltaire, Rousseau)
   b. Impact on Albany Plan of Union, Articles of Confederation, and U.S. Constitution
3. Colonial experience

Those who are unfamiliar with the Haudenosaunee political system might wonder what it is, particularly since educational authorities in New York State rank it as equal in importance to the European Enlightenment and suggest that it strongly influenced not only colonial leaders but the leading intellectuals of Europe. The Haudenosaunee political system was the Iroquois confederation of five (later six) Indian tribes in upper New York State, which conducted war and civil affairs through a council of chiefs, each with one vote. In 1754, Benjamin Franklin

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proposed a colonial union at a conference in Albany; his plan, said to be inspired by the Iroquois Confederation, was rejected by the other colonies. Today, Indian activists believe that the Iroquois Confederation was the model for the American Constitution, and the New York State Department of Education has decided that they are right. That no other state sees fit to give the American Indians equal billing with the European Enlightenment may be owing to the fact that the Indians in New York State (numbering less than forty thousand) have been more politically effective than elsewhere or that other states have not yet learned about this method of reducing "Eurocentrism" in their American history classes.

Particularism can easily be carried to extremes. Students of Fredonian descent must hear that their ancestors were seminal in the development of all human civilization and that without the Fredonian contribution, we would all be living in caves or trees, bereft of art, technology, and culture. To explain why Fredonians today are in modest circumstances, given their historic eminence, children are taught that somewhere, long ago, another culture stole the Fredonians' achievements, palmed them off as their own, and then oppressed the Fredonians.

I first encountered this argument almost twenty years ago, when I was a graduate student. I shared a small office with a young professor, and I listened as she patiently explained to a student why she had given him a D on a term paper. In his paper, he argued that the Arabs had stolen mathematics from the Nubians in the desert long ago (I forget in which century this theft allegedly occurred). She tried to explain to him about the necessity of historical evidence. He was unconvinced, since he believed that he had uncovered a great truth that was beyond proof. The part I couldn't understand was how anyone could lose knowledge by sharing it. After all, cultures are constantly influencing one another, exchanging ideas and art and technology, and the exchange usually is enriching, not depleting.

Today, there are a number of books and articles advancing controversial theories about the origins of civilization. An important work, *The African Origin of Civilization: Myth or Reality*, by Senegalese scholar Cheikh Anta Diop, argues that ancient Egypt was a black civilization, that all races are descended from the black race, and that the achievements of "western" civilization originated in Egypt. The views of Diop and other Africanists have been condensed into an everyman's paperback titled *What They Never Told You in History Class* by Indus Khamit Kush. This latter book claims that Moses, Jesus, Buddha, Mohammed, and Vishnu were Africans; that the first Indians, Chinese, Hebrews, Greeks, Romans, Britains, and Americans were Africans; and that the

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first mathematicians, scientists, astronomers, and physicians were Africans. A debate currently raging among some classicists is whether the Greeks "stole" the philosophy, art, and religion of the ancient Egyptians and whether the ancient Egyptians were black Africans. George G. M. James's *Stolen Legacy* insists that the Greeks "stole the Legacy of the African Continent and called it their own." James argues that the civilization of Greece, the vaunted foundation of European culture, owed everything it knew and did to its African predecessors. Thus, the roots of western civilization lie not in Greece and Rome, but in Egypt and, ultimately, in black Africa.

Similar speculation was fueled by the publication in 1987 of Martin Bernal's *Black Athena: The Afroasiatic Roots of Classical Civilization*, Volume 1, *The Fabrication of Ancient Greece, 1785–1985*, although the controversy predates Bernal's book. In a fascinating foray into the politics of knowledge, Bernal attributes the preference of Western European scholars for Greece over Egypt as the fount of knowledge to nearly two centuries of racism and "Europocentrism," but he is uncertain about the color of the ancient Egyptians. However, a review of Bernal's book last year in the *Village Voice* began, "What color were the ancient Egyptians? Blacker than Mubarak, baby." The same article claimed that white racist archeologists chiseled the noses off ancient Egyptian statues so that future generations would not see the typically African facial characteristics. The debate reached the pages of the *Biblical Archeology Review* last year in an article titled "Were the Ancient Egyptians Black or White?" The author, classicist Frank J. Yurco, argues that some Egyptian rulers were black, others were not, and that "the ancient Egyptians did not think in these terms." The issue, wrote Yurco, "is a chimera, cultural baggage from our own society that can only be imposed artificially on ancient Egyptian society."

Most educationists are not even aware of the debate about whether the ancient Egyptians were black or white, but they are very sensitive to charges that the schools' curricula are Eurocentric, and they are eager to rid the schools of the taint of Eurocentrism. It is hardly surprising that America's schools would recognize strong cultural ties with Europe since our nation's political, religious, educational, and economic institutions were created chiefly by people of European descent, our government was shaped by European ideas, and nearly 80 percent of the people who live here are of European descent. The particularists treat all of this history as a racist bias toward Europe, rather than as the matter-of-fact consequences of European immigration. Even so, American education is not centered on Europe. American education, if it is centered on anything, is centered on itself. It is "Americentric." Most American students today have never studied any world history; they

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know very little about Europe, and even less about the rest of the world. Their minds are rooted solidly in the here and now. When the Berlin Wall was opened in the fall of 1989, journalists discovered that most American teenagers had no idea what it was, nor why its opening was such a big deal. Nonetheless, Eurocentrism provides a better target than Americentrism.

In school districts where most children are black and Hispanic, there has been a growing tendency to embrace particularism rather than pluralism. Many of the children in these districts perform poorly in academic classes and leave school without graduating. They would fare better in school if they had well-educated and well-paid teachers, small classes, good materials, encouragement at home and school, summer academic programs, protection from the drugs and crime that ravage their neighborhoods, and higher expectations of satisfying careers upon graduation. These are expensive and time-consuming remedies that must also engage the larger society beyond the school. The lure of particularism is that it offers a less complicated anodyne, one in which the children's academic deficiencies may be addressed—or set aside—by inflating their racial pride. The danger of this remedy is that it will detract attention from the real needs of schools and the real interests of children, while simultaneously arousing distorted race pride in children of all races, increasing racial antagonism and producing fresh recruits for white and black racist groups.

The particularist critique gained a major forum in New York in 1989, with the release of a report called "A Curriculum of Inclusion," produced by a task force created by the State Commissioner of Education, Thomas Sobol. In 1987, soon after his appointment, Sobol appointed a Task Force on Minorities to review the state's curriculum for instances of bias. He did this not because there had been complaints about bias in the curriculum, but because—as a newly appointed state commissioner whose previous job had been to superintend the public schools of a wealthy suburb, Scarsdale—he wanted to demonstrate his sensitivity to minority concerns. The Sobol task force was composed of representatives of African American, Hispanic, Asian American, and American Indian groups.

The task force engaged four consultants, one from each of the aforementioned racial or ethnic minorities, to review nearly one hundred teachers' guides prepared by the state. These guides define the state's curriculum, usually as a list of facts and concepts to be taught, along with model activities. The primary focus of the consultants, not surprisingly, was the history and social studies curriculum. As it happened, the history curriculum had been extensively revised in 1987 to make it multicultural, in both American and world history. In the 1987 revision the time

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given to Western Europe was reduced to one-quarter of one year, as part of a two-year global studies sequence in which equal time was allotted to seven major world regions, including Africa and Latin America.

As a result of the 1987 revisions in American and world history, New York State had one of the most advanced multicultural history-social studies curricula in the country. Dozens of social studies teachers and consultants had participated, and the final draft was reviewed by such historians as Eric Foner of Columbia University, the late Hazel Hertzberg of Teachers College, Columbia University, and Christopher Lasch of the University of Rochester. The curriculum was overloaded with facts, almost to the point of numbing students with details and trivia, but it was not insensitive to ethnicity in American history or unduly devoted to European history.

But the Sobol task force decided that this curriculum was biased and Eurocentric. The first sentence of the task force report summarizes its major thesis: "African Americans, Asian Americans, Puerto Ricans/Latinos, and Native Americans have all been the victims of an intellectual and educational oppression that has characterized the culture and institutions of the United States and the European American world for centuries."

The task force report was remarkable in that it vigorously denounced bias without identifying a single instance of bias in the curricular guides under review. Instead, the consultants employed harsh, sometimes inflammatory, rhetoric to treat every difference of opinion or interpretation as an example of racial bias. The African-American consultant, for example, excoriates the curriculum for its "White Anglo-Saxon (WASP) value system and norms," its "deep-seated pathologies of racial hatred" and its "white nationalism"; he decries as bias the fact that children study Egypt as part of the Middle East instead of as part of Africa. Perhaps Egypt should be studied as part of the African unit (geographically, it is located on the African continent); but placing it in one region rather than the other is not what most people think of as racism or bias. The "Latino" consultant criticizes the use of the term "Spanish-American War" instead of "Spanish-Cuban-American War." The Native American consultant complains that tribal languages are classified as "foreign languages."

The report is consistently Europhobic. It repeatedly expresses negative judgments on "European Americans" and on everything Western and European. All people with a white skin are referred to as "Anglo-Saxons" and "WASPs." Europe, says the report, is uniquely responsible for producing aggressive individuals who "were ready to 'discover, invade and conquer' foreign land because of greed, racism and national egoism." All white people are held collectively guilty for the historical

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crimes of slavery and racism. There is no mention of the "Anglo-Saxons" who opposed slavery and racism. Nor does the report acknowledge that some whites have been victims of discrimination and oppression. The African American consultant writes of the Constitution, "There is something vulgar and revolting in glorifying a process that heaped undeserved rewards on a segment of the population while oppressing the majority."

The New York task force proposal is not merely about the reconstruction of what is taught. It goes a step further to suggest that the history curriculum may be used to ensure that "children from Native American, Puerto Rican/Latino, Asian American, and African American cultures will have higher self-esteem and self-respect, while children from European cultures will have a less arrogant perspective of being part of the group that has 'done it all.'"

In February 1990, Commissioner Sobol asked the New York Board of Regents to endorse a sweeping revision of the history curriculum to make it more multicultural. His recommendations were couched in measured tones, not in the angry rhetoric of his task force. The board supported his request unanimously. It remains to be seen whether New York pursues the particularist path marked out by the Commissioner's advisory group or finds its way to the concept of pluralism within a democratic tradition.

The rising tide of particularism encourages the politicization of all curricula in the schools. If education bureaucrats bend to the political and ideological winds, as is their wont, we can anticipate a generation of struggle over the content of the curriculum in mathematics, science, literature, and history. Demands for "culturally relevant" studies, for ethnostudies of all kinds, will open the classroom to unending battles over whose version is taught, who gets credit for what, and which ethno-interpretation is appropriate. Only recently have districts begun to resist the demands of fundamentalist groups to censor textbooks and library books (and some have not yet begun to do so).

The spread of particularism throws into question the very idea of American public education. Public schools exist to teach children the general skills and knowledge that they need to succeed in American society, and the specific skills and knowledge that they need in order to function as American citizens. They receive public support because they have a public function. Historically, the public schools were known as "common schools" because they were schools for all, even if the children of all the people did not attend them. Over the years, the courts have found that it was unconstitutional to teach religion in the common schools, or to separate children on the basis of their race in the common

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schools. In their curriculum, their hiring practices, and their general philosophy, the public schools must not discriminate against or give preference to any racial or ethnic group. Yet they are permitted to accommodate cultural diversity by, for example, serving food that is culturally appropriate or providing library collections that emphasize the interests of the local community. However, they should not be expected to teach children to view the world through an ethnocentric perspective that rejects or ignores the common culture. For generations, those groups that wanted to inculcate their religion or their ethnic heritage have instituted private schools—after school, on weekends, or on a full-time basis. There, children learn with others of the same group—Greeks, Poles, Germans, Japanese, Chinese, Jews, Lutherans, Catholics, and so on—and are taught by people from the same group. Valuable as this exclusive experience has been for those who choose it, this has not been the role of public education. One of the primary purposes of public education has been to create a national community, a definition of citizenship and culture that is both expansive and *inclusive*.

The curriculum in public schools must be based on whatever knowledge and practices have been determined to be best by professionals—experienced teachers and scholars—who are competent to make these judgments. Professional societies must be prepared to defend the integrity of their disciplines. When called upon, they should establish review committees to examine disputes over curriculum and to render judgment, in order to help school officials fend off improper political pressure. Where genuine controversies exist, they should be taught and debated in the classroom. Was Egypt a black civilization? Why not raise the question, read the arguments of the different sides in the debate, show slides of Egyptian pharoahs and queens, read books about life in ancient Egypt, invite guest scholars from the local university, and visit museums with Egyptian collections? If scholars disagree, students should know it. One great advantage of this approach is that students will see that history is a lively study, that textbooks are fallible, that historians disagree, that the writing of history is influenced by the historian's politics and ideology, that history is written by people who make choices among alternative facts and interpretations, and that history changes as new facts are uncovered and new interpretations win adherents. They will also learn that cultures and civilizations constantly interact, exchange ideas, and influence one another, and that the idea of racial or ethnic purity is a myth. Another advantage is that students might once again study ancient history, which has all but disappeared from the curricula of American schools. (California recently introduced a required sixth grade course in ancient civilizations, but ancient history is otherwise *terra incognita* in American education.)

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The multicultural controversy may do wonders for the study of history, which has been neglected for years in American schools. At this time, only half of our high school graduates ever study any world history. Any serious attempt to broaden students' knowledge of Africa, Europe, Asia, and Latin America will require at least two, and possibly three years of world history (a requirement thus far only in California). American history, too, will need more time than the one-year high-school survey course. Those of us who have insisted for years on the importance of history in the curriculum may not be ready to assent to its redemptive power, but hope that our new allies will ultimately join a constructive dialogue that strengthens the place of history in the schools.

As cultural controversies arise, educators must adhere to the principle of "E Pluribus Unum." That is, they must maintain a balance between the demands of the one—the nation of which we are common citizens—and the many—the varied histories of the American people. It is not necessary to denigrate either the one or the many. Pluralism is a positive value, but it is also important that we preserve a sense of an American community—a society and a culture to which we all belong. If there is no overall community with an agreed-upon vision of liberty and justice, if all we have is a collection of racial and ethnic cultures, lacking any common bonds, then we have no means to mobilize public opinion on behalf of people who are not members of our particular group. We have, for example, no reason to support public education. If there is no larger community, then each group will want to teach its own children in its own way, and public education ceases to exist.

History should not be confused with filiopietism. History gives no grounds for race pride. No race has a monopoly on virtue. If anything, a study of history should inspire humility, rather than pride. People of every racial group have committed terrible crimes, often against others of the same group. Whether one looks at the history of Europe or Africa or Latin America or Asia, every continent offers examples of inhumanity. Slavery has existed in civilizations around the world for centuries. Examples of genocide can be found around the world, throughout history, from ancient times right through to our own day. Governments and cultures, sometimes by edict, sometimes simply following tradition, have practiced not only slavery, but human sacrifice, infanticide, cliterodectomy, and mass murder. If we teach children this, they might recognize how absurd both racial hatred and racial chauvinism are.

What must be preserved in the study of history is the spirit of inquiry, the readiness to open new questions and to pursue new understandings. History, at its best, is a search for truth. The best way to portray this search is through debate and controversy, rather than through imposition of fixed beliefs and immutable facts. Perhaps the most dangerous aspect

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of school history is its tendency to become Official History, a sanctified version of the Truth taught by the state to captive audiences and embedded in beautiful mass-market textbooks as holy writ. When Official History is written by committees responding to political pressures, rather than by scholars synthesizing the best available research, then the errors of the past are replaced by the politically fashionable errors of the present. It may be difficult to teach children that history is both important and uncertain, and that even the best historians never have all the pieces of the jigsaw puzzle, but it is necessary to do so. If state education departments permit the revision of their history courses and textbooks to become an exercise in power politics, then the entire process of state-level curriculum-making becomes suspect, as does public education itself.

The question of self-esteem is extraordinarily complex, and it goes well beyond the content of the curriculum. Most of what we call self-esteem is formed in the home and in a variety of life experiences, not only in school. Nonetheless, it has been important for blacks—and for other racial groups—to learn about the history of slavery and of the civil rights movement; it has been important for blacks to know that their ancestors actively resisted enslavement and actively pursued equality; and it has been important for blacks and others to learn about black men and women who fought courageously against racism and who provide models of courage, persistence, and intellect. These are instances where the content of the curriculum reflects sound scholarship, and at the same time probably lessens racial prejudice and provides inspiration for those who are descendants of slaves. But knowing about the travails and triumphs of one's forebears does not necessarily translate into either self-esteem or personal accomplishment. For most children, self-esteem—the self-confidence that grows out of having reached a goal—comes not from hearing about the monuments of their ancestors but as a consequence of what they are able to do and accomplish through their own efforts.

As I reflected on these issues, I recalled reading an interview a few years ago with a talented black runner. She said that her model is Mikhail Baryshnikov. She admires him because he is a magnificent athlete. He is not black; he is not female; he is not American-born; he is not even a runner. But he inspires her because of the way he trained and used his body. When I read this, I thought how narrow-minded it is to believe that people can be inspired *only* by those who are exactly like them in race and ethnicity.

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Prone to Worry

JANE O. WAYNE

Out of a sound sleep
a thought he didn't know he had
turns against him,
seizes him, head to toe,
like a muscle cramp.

Twisting sheets, throwing blankets
to the floor, he's at it again:
the back and forth of worry
like windshield wipers
on a spot that won't rub off.

No map, no moon—he's run off course,
broken down in a tough neighborhood
of the mind, a back street
where anything can happen after dark,
any thought can hit and run.

He gets nowhere on his mattress
rolling helplessly
like a pencil in someone else's hand.
No matter what he does,
he can't get comfortable, can't sleep.

One by one, his spidery fears
come crawling out of the corners.
At this late hour,

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their webs are shadow-larger
than the facts.

This way, that—
he shifts his weight in bed
the way a traveler does a bag
that's too heavy for him, some load
he can't put down.

His head above his sleep,
he's in the deep end now,
treading water—
all his troubles surfacing,
their ripples widening around him.

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Guadalcanal

MATTHEW STEVENSON

LIKE MANY PEOPLE NOW IN THEIR THIRTIES, I grew up in the long shadow cast by the Second World War. A green wool uniform hung in our cedar closet, and accounts of the Pacific island campaigns were part of the casual family conversations during Saturday errands or cleanings of the garage.

At an early age I knew my father had served with the marines, that the fighting had taken place on remote Pacific islands, and that the destruction of Hiroshima had saved American forces from a deadly assault on the Japanese mainland.

Legends, or so they seemed, were woven around distant places like the Solomon Islands, Espíritu Santo, and New Britain. In other families, similar stories must have been told about the Normandy beaches, Cassino, and night flights over Ploesti. These war stories were vivid scenes in the tableau that explained not just something about my father, but what it was to fight in a war.

In the early 1960s television made it easy to imagine the war. On a nightly basis it was possible to track small units on their way to either Berlin or Tokyo. German and Japanese soldiers died by the hundreds, in a manner that portrayed war as no more difficult than a cattle roundup or, in the case of snipers, a fox hunt. By that time John Wayne was devoting less effort to the defeat of the Japanese. But other actors, such as Cliff Robertson in *PT 109*, portrayed the Pacific campaigns as updated versions of chivalrous quests. Armies were never depicted as faceless, industrial machines or as capable of such blunders as Tarawa or Peleliu. Instead they were squads or torpedo boats, like that skippered by Lt. John Kennedy, which inevitably survived tough scapes behind enemy lines. No wonder Vietnam proved such a disappointment. Didn't the North Vietnamese realize their role in the epic of Americans at arms?

Although I warmed to Hollywood's romance of the war won with errant knights, I noticed my father gave it a cool reception. As I now recollect, he never took me to war pictures, nor did he express anything

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but derisive humor for movie-lot combat. But he did talk freely about the war. And from our conversations about what it was like to survive an air raid or lead an assault, I inferred that the best way to fathom war was to read about it.

Even my father's answers to my boyish questions about bombs and bullets contained allusions to literature. Before I was able to finish full-length books, I knew that the key to understanding jungle warfare lay in *The Thin Red Line* by James Jones or that Erich M. Remarque's *All Quiet on the Western Front* applied to trenches on Okinawa as well as to those in France. The memoirs of generals were written by publicists and were probably unreliable. The only way to understand what had happened was to hear it from someone who was there. Truth, it seemed, could be picked up from a radiant that grew weaker the farther you got from the front lines.

Just as our conversations of war touched on its literature, so did they usually return to Guadalcanal. My father landed there on D-Day and led a rifle company through four months of the campaign, which included a bayonet charge on the banks of the Tenaru River. But he refused either to romanticize the fighting or to wallow in self-pity for having been sent there. If anything, his narratives were, and still are, laced with ironic detachment, as if survival—then and now—required a separation from the brutality of the warfare or the misery of the conditions.

Because Guadalcanal in our family acquired the position of a mythological site, it never occurred to me that I might go there. Not only was it a dark land of giants, but it lay in the South Pacific, among the far-flung archipelago that stretched from Honolulu to Australia. I never included it even in my travel daydreams until I was given William Manchester's *Goodbye, Darkness*. The inscription from my father read: "Someday you will travel among these islands and form your own memories of the distant battle sites."

I found the Manchester memoirs a revelation. Passages evoked qualities I had admired in the autobiographies of Siegfried Sassoon and Robert Graves. But Manchester was remembering not the trenches along the Somme, but the island warfare that had loomed so large in my childhood imagination. He also retraced the steps taken by the marines on their way from New Guinea to Okinawa.

Until Manchester proved otherwise, I had thought Gog and Magog more accessible than Guadalcanal, Cape Gloucester, or the Palaus. But with relative ease he had flown to Honiara, the capital of Guadalcanal, and hiked across the battlefield as if he were visiting Bull Run or Spotsylvania. His writing mixed a travel account with a wartime memoir and a history of the Pacific campaign such that it takes a careful reader to figure out that Manchester wasn't the only marine to have seen action in

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all the campaigns. But I chose to overlook such narrative liberties. Manchester had given me confidence that someday I might "travel among these islands."

My chance to visit Guadalcanal came after a business trip to Australia that ended with several meetings in Papua New Guinea. Its capital, Port Moresby, is seven hundred miles east of Guadalcanal, although the flights between them tend to be on island-hoppers. I finished my work late on a Tuesday. The next morning, instead of starting the slow trip home to New York, I put in a 4:00 A.M. wake-up call, in time to catch a 6:00 A.M. flight to Guadalcanal.

The only taxi in front of the Port Moresby Travelodge needed a roll-start for the engine to engage. In the pre-dawn blackness, the driver coaxed his Holden sedan around hairpin, coastal turns and through yellow lights. Port Moresby has little to recommend it, especially in the middle of the night. Downtown is a disjointed mix of high-rise apartments, suburban office blocks, and open-front stores that attract midday idlers. Like Juneau, Alaska, it is a landlocked capital surrounded by jagged, forbidding mountains. The landscape is dry and dusty, and the one beach in town is avoided because crime is endemic. The inner harbor, with some rusting hulks and a yacht club, evokes a Somerset Maugham short story. The plot would involve the alcoholism of a diplomat's wife, who would be unable to escape the confines of the club, let alone the city or the country.

I had some doubts about leaving myself, as the driver nursed the engine at lonely streetlights. But we made the airport with time to spare. Air Niugini flight number 82 climbed to cruising altitude above the Owen Stanley Range, where low-level clouds whisked among labyrinthine valleys. Among those ridges, at the start of the Second World War, Australian troops had defeated the Japanese in bitter jungle fighting along the Kokoda Trail. The day before in Moresby I had driven to the Bomana War Cemetery that lies in the foothills of the Owen Stanleys. The cemetery was the familiar symmetrical pattern of white headstones set against neatly tended grass. All had engraved poetic inscriptions or simple family farewells, suggesting an orderly end. But the hills in the distance, where most of the men had died in the hand-to-hand fighting, had the look of a tropical Appalachia.

It takes fifty minutes to fly from Bougainville down The Slot to Guadalcanal. On either side of the plane were small clusters of tropical islands whose names form a roster of Second World War battles: Vella Lavella, New Georgia, the Russells, Savo Island, and Tulagi. At its simplest, the campaign in the Solomons was to control this turquoise corridor that came to represent the left flank of the Japanese march to New Zealand and Australia. Nowhere in the world did the U.S. suffer the

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naval defeats that it sustained off Guadalcanal, in waters that came to be known as Iron Bottom Sound. Eventually American firepower exhausted the enemy. But with a few twists of fate, the Japanese fleets in The Slot could easily have crossed the *T* on the idea of the American century.

Guadalcanal is one of those places, at least in literature, that rarely makes a good impression. Jack London, who sailed there on the ketch *Snark,* wrote: "If I were a king, the worst punishment I could inflict upon my enemies would be to banish them to the Solomons." William Manchester remembers his first emotions as mixed: "I thought of Baudelaire: *fleurs du mal.* It was a vision of beauty, but of evil beauty. . . . In between were thick, steamy matted, almost impenetrable screens of cassia, liana vines, and twisted creepers, masked here and there by mangrove swamps and clumps of bamboo. . . . The forest seemed almost faunal: arrogant, malevolent, cruel." My father described his first impression in an account of the battle that was published in *American Heritage*: "At first light we stood along the rail and looked out across the calm, violet water. There lay the island, dark and impassively sinister, shrouded in an early morning haze pinpricked by bright orange flashes of shell fire from our ships."

For me Guadalcanal appeared as rocky jungle, whose inhospitable mountaintops were encased in clouds. We made landfall over Cape Esperance, the northwestern tip of the island, and flew parallel to the coastal road. From a map in a history I was reading, I recognized Point Cruz, the Matanikau River, Lunga Point, and the mouth of the Ilu—places of battle that I previously imagined as remote, in many ways, as Cold Harbor, Ypres, or Kasserine Pass. I was also struck by the island's colors: the warmth of an azure sea against a stark green jungle. In my mind Guadalcanal was a black-and-white photograph that showed men coming ashore or hiking jungle trails. The sea and the underbrush were always gray.

I cleared customs at Henderson International Airport, a name that tickles my father, who knew it only as Henderson Field, a muddy landing strip that was the prize of battle. In the waiting room was a brass plaque that listed the winners at Guadalcanal of the Congressional Medal of Honor. Names such as Archer Vandergrift, who was the commanding general, or Merritt Edson, a battalion commander, I knew well from my reading, but to the other passengers, who filed out carrying scuba gear and tennis rackets, this might have been an intersection in a New England town and they might well have been walking past a faint inscription about deeds accomplished at the Wilderness.

On the bus ride into town, I was seated next to an American I judged to be in his early seventies. He wore khakis, a sun hat, and betrayed none of the hesitance of a first-time visitor. He had been on Guadalcanal

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during the war, although after the fighting, and pointed out such landmarks as the original control tower at Henderson Field, Kukum airstrip, and the Lunga River, which you cross on the twenty-minute ride into Honiara. To see the battlefields he said I would need both a car and a driver. To get around, he added, I should buy some topographical maps from the Ministry of Agriculture and Lands, which was a short walk from the hotel.

Honiara looks like one of those Caribbean towns that travel guides recommend for a half-day's shopping. It has schools, a few oil tanks, government buildings, lots of little boys riding in the back of pickup trucks, and the Mendana Hotel. The veranda bar, overlooking Point Cruz, is divided between local businessmen, with briefcases at their ankles, and American veterans, on trips of remembrance. Many of the Americans wore Hawaiian shirts, gimme caps, and name tags that bore the insignia of their travel brigades. I found it difficult to recognize these men as the dashing soldiers of my childhood imagination, as I am sure it is hard for many of them to fit together their lives then and now. Chatting with some of them in the lobby and at the bar made me remember meeting a World War I veteran in a Yugoslavian village in 1976. He spoke no English, but we were trying to understand each other when he abruptly left the conversation, only to return moments later, carrying a large framed picture. It showed the same man in his early twenties, with dark hair, a thin moustache, and military trim. "You see," his melancholic expression conveyed, "I haven't always been what you're seeing today."

After lunch I bought the maps and picked up the car and driver, whose name was Paul. I wondered why I needed a driver at all until we crossed the Lunga River and plunged into a coconut plantation on small dirt trails. I have always thought of Guadalcanal as Gettysburg in the Pacific—an improbable place for the collision of two industrial armies. At Gettysburg today it is hard to see the battlefields for the monuments. But Guadalcanal, as my friend on the bus had pointed out, is unmarked. I had my topographical surveys, a military history, a guide, and a rented car, and still it was difficult to navigate through the Lever Brothers plantation, which was the original perimeter. The island doesn't have a visitors' center, driving tours, battlefield signs, or gift shops. Hence, unlike the geometric symmetry of Civil War history as presented by the Department of the Interior, what remains vivid at Guadalcanal, even at midday, is the fog of war.

On one of these cart trails near Henderson Field, we came across another car full of Americans. On the edge of the thick underbrush, a man about my age said that his father was out in the thicket looking for his foxhole. Before long the father emerged, breathless, to declare that

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he had found the foxhole where he had lived for the worst six months of the campaign. I asked a few questions about the island then and now, but instead of an answer, what I got was a monologue. The father recounted landing on the island, his part in the campaign, how he survived, the importance of air power, the sweep of the Pacific campaign, and on and on. Great interest on my part turned to tedium until, after twenty minutes, I walked back to my car. Paul, the driver, was more polite and got another five minutes on what General MacArthur had been up to in New Guinea. I am sure the father had spent a conventional life and functioned normally. But either the heat or his return to Guadalcanal had moved the plates along some dormant emotional fault line. I regretted my impatience, but now I understood my own father's phrase when he would talk of the war's effect and how, for some, it had scrambled their brains.

We threaded our way through the coconut plantation to Henderson Field, now a long asphalt runway, and then drove east to Red Beach, where the marines, and among them my father, first landed. The popular image of amphibious landings in the Pacific has marines hitting beaches edged with thick jungle. Forty-eight years ago that might have been Red Beach, but now it is a thin strip of sand that gives way to scrubby grass, the occasional palm tree, and a saw mill. I had expected a marker, a few plaques, maybe a map with arrows showing what had happened, which is typical of the American battlefields in Europe, but instead we parked near a rubbish heap and walked to the beach through the yard of a seaside house.

To reconstruct events meant spreading the topographical maps in the sand and digging through the books and articles I had jammed into a shoulder bag. It was easy to retrace my father's steps because he has written two accounts of the battle. Immediately after the campaign, probably in January of 1943, he wrote his company's report. It was forgotten until the summer of 1989, when one of his men sent him a copy with a note: "I was cleaning out an old foot locker recently and ran across the enclosed documents. . . . Thank you for the good example you set for this 18 year old country boy from Alabama." Before my trip my father handed me a copy, but added a critique of his own literary style. "This is written," he said, as if to place the writing along the spectrum of Guadalcanal prose, "in that dry military style. It has all the usual battlefield clichés about achieving objectives and engaging the enemy." But I know it pleased him that the report had resurfaced.

I also had my father's article from *American Heritage*, which he wrote in the summer of 1983, at the prompting of John Keegan, the military historian and a friend, who had heard his account of the battle and urged him to set it down on paper.

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The narrator of the company report is a young first lieutenant, who records the action in a style now preferred in corporate memos. For example, he describes the landing: "We penetrated from the beach to a distance of 500 yards inland and crossed a tributary of the Ilu without opposition. . . . Darkness found the company deep in the jungle at the headwaters of the Ilu. . . . At 0500 firing broke out on the left flank which was answered ineffectively. Pfc Oscar Grover was killed."

The writer in *American Heritage*, by contrast, speaks in the voice I know to be my father's, and the detachment of forty years gives the narrative what Paul Fussell has described as the irony of war. Guadalcanal is not sixty minutes of well-played football, but an unending series of long days' journeys that are followed by terrifying nights. The landing and the move inland are not previews of John Wayne at Iwo Jima, but an introduction to the aspects of war that are confusing, illogical, random, and fatal:

> No orders came until just before nightfall, when we were told to move on again. We followed the company to our right, leaving the high grass and pushing through the jungle single file. Darkness came swiftly, and I thought this was an extraordinary way to be going anywhere, toward a possible enemy position, in the dead of night. When the command came to halt, the men flopped down on either side of the trail. Shortly thereafter, as we lay together in the blackness, came our first experience of pure terror. Without warning, a cacophony of small arms fire enveloped us. A Japanese ambush? But the shots were coming at point-blank range. Too close! We were firing at each other. I don't know how I made my voice heard above the din, but the platoon leaders and noncoms took up the cry, "Cease fire." Shaken and exhausted, we lay silent until the dawn, which disclosed one man dead and one wounded—the first installment of the price we were to pay.

From Red Beach, where I was standing, it took my father's company two days to advance through the jungle and seize the airstrip. Then the company took a position on the perimeter, about a mile inland, and prepared for the Japanese counterattack. His company report indicates, "Outposts were manned on along the east end of the air field." But writing forty years later he remembers, "There were gaps of hundreds of yards between the fortified positions of our units. . . . The only thing that enabled us to survive the battles that were to come was the incredible luck that inspired the Japanese always to attack at those points where we were dug in instead of the vast empty spaces where we were not."

Back in the car, Paul and I wandered among some of these empty spaces, looking for the site of the Battle of Tenaru. It actually occurred on a spit of the Ilu, a nearby river, but early military maps errantly transposed the river names. The confusion continues fifty years later. Paul knew Red Beach and Henderson Field, but not the Battle of the

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Tenaru. Nor did his knowledge of jungle streams match that of the topographical maps. Again I was angered that our Pentagon dollars had never included signs to remember a pivotal battle in the Pacific. Belleau Wood along the Marne is decorated with monuments and maps of the World War I marine victory, but part of Red Beach is a junkyard, and the only way to find the Ilu spit is with topographical surveys.

I was eager to find it because that is where Americans first defeated Japanese infantry and where my father led a bayonet charge into enemy lines. Many times I had heard the story of how the Japanese had sent the Ichiki Battalion along the beach to attack and, they thought, destroy the U.S. defensive positions around the airfield. Instead it was unable to ford the so-called Tenaru and was enveloped by a battalion that included my father's company. Of the bayonet charge, he later wrote: "Marines and Japanese fought face-to-face in the swirling gunsmoke, lunging, stabbing, and smashing with bayonets and rifle butts." In the battle the entire Japanese battalion, about nine hundred men, died. A famous Second World War photograph of the Tenaru shows rows of dead Japanese soldiers pressed into the sand, as if they have washed ashore in a deadly tide. It echoes "A Harvest of Death," Timothy O'Sullivan's photograph of Union dead in a misty Gettysburg field.

After a long walk through dense shoreline bush, I finally stood at the mouth of the Tenaru and recalled the disturbing end to this familiar story. After the fighting had ceased, a Japanese soldier, playing dead, threw a hand grenade at several American soldiers, including my father, who later wrote: "Miraculously we were unhurt by the blast; we rushed at him, and as d'Errico covered him with his rifle, I placed my .45 automatic pistol to his head and pulled the trigger."

Although such action was the ingredient of the movies I enjoyed as a child, I found it uncomfortable to visit a place where my father had killed a man. Casualties in war are easier to fathom when they come in broad engagements and end up in body counts. To contribute to my unease, whenever my father tells this story he adds that he went through the man's wallet and found a snapshot of his wife and two children smiling before a lacquered screen. Even when I was young, such a postscript changed the account from a gung ho war story to one that saw, in every one of the war dead, a distant family. For my father, the wallet picture may have been the only time on Guadalcanal that he saw the Japanese as something other than a hated foe, capable of every treachery. As he later wrote: "Hacking our way through the jungle, we tended to think of the enemy as wily Orientals at home in this nightmarish terrain. We forgot that they were young men from crowded cities like Tokyo and farmland like Kyushu, just as we were city boys from Boston or country lads from Georgia."

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Both my father's company report and the magazine article are remarkable for the way they describe death in individual terms. The fighting on Guadalcanal lasted six months. Thirty thousand men on both sides were killed. Under such conditions, I would expect a battlefield report to describe casualties just as Nathaniel Hawthorne had described the death of the stranger in "The Ambitious Guest": "His name and person utterly unknown; his history, his way of life, his plans, a mystery never to be solved." Instead each death or wounding is treated with an empathy I never imagined to be part of troop movements in the Second World War. As a result, the report reads like a log from a beleaguered clipper ship or Daniel DeFoe's *Journal from a Plague Year*:

> At 0500 a low level bombing attack was sustained in which Private Dan R. Hunt was killed and Private Andrew J. Thomason wounded. . . . Subsequently dysentery heavily affected the health of the Company. Private Thomas J. Knichel died of the disease August 27. . . . Corp. Zoli T. Almasi was wounded by shrapnel. . . . In the ensuing fire fight Private John C. Green was killed.

The idea of war as the sum of specific deaths was also a recurring theme among the early war stories that I can remember. It formed the antidote to my favorable impression of war as a variation on professional football. In particular, the death that seared my conscience was that of Bob Fowler, who served as lieutenant with my father on Guadalcanal. Millions died in the Second World War, but his death was the only one that seemed like the loss of a family member.

By the age of seven, I knew that my father's closest friend, Bob Fowler, had died, as it was put, "on the last day of the war." I remember wondering, in a childish way, why he had not known the war was about to end and laid low. His picture in the family album shows a boyish man, in his early twenties, with sharp, exuberant features and straight blond hair, not unlike a lead actor in a British documentary on East Africa. My father always referred to him by his nickname "Swifty," which added to the legend.

In the report, Bob Fowler often gets singled out for special mention, as if he were a favorite son or brother: "The enemy was compelled to retire upon receiving fire from the light machine guns in the weapons platoon, commanded by Lt. Fowler. . . . After capturing Mahile, Lt. Fowler was ordered to move east and investigate a small native mission. . . . Lt. Fowler made a three day combat patrol to wipe out an enemy field piece which had been registering in the sector. He personally accounted for a Japanese officer." But the Bob Fowler described often to my sisters and me was not a ferocious warrior or grizzled marine so much as a cheerful, warmhearted friend who somehow had the ability to endure the horrors of war and maintain a genial disposition.

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Although I knew Bob Fowler had died mythically "on the last day of the war," I never knew exactly how. Nor did my father, to my knowledge. Bob Fowler had left the First Marines after the campaign on New Britain, returned to the United States to take command of his own company, and died while fighting on Okinawa. More than once I heard my father say: "I always felt that if he had stayed with me I could have gotten him through." Anyone who comes home from any war returns with many regrets, and for my father they focused on the death of Bob Fowler. It was as if the war had a purpose and meaning until that point, after which all the fighting became a variation on the senselessness that destroyed the Warsaw ghetto.

The story ended there until I discovered in *Goodbye, Darkness* that the company Bob Fowler had commanded was William Manchester's. And in Manchester's book is an account of how Fowler died. Manchester includes it in a passage that elaborates on James Jones's belief of how easy it is in war to slip over "the thin red line between the sane and the mad":

> My father had warned me that war is grisly beyond imagining. Now I believed him. Bob Fowler, F Company's popular, towheaded commander, had bled to death after being hit in the spleen. His orderly, who adored him, snatched up a submachine gun and unforgivably massacred a line of unarmed Japanese soldiers who had just surrendered.

I actually read the passage to my father, strangely enough, at a Memorial Day family barbecue. He was eager to hear what had happened, and I simply started reading aloud. When I finished the passage, he flushed red and swore sharply and uncharacteristically in front of the group, "God damn it to hell," while stinging the seat cushion with his palm. Obviously he had never heard the story, and it was painful to think of his friend bleeding to death helplessly. Nor did he want to hear that Bob Fowler's death had been the cause of an atrocity. The cry was a brief scream of reason that recoiled at so many lonely, needless deaths in the war.

During the Italian campaign, Ernie Pyle wrote a celebrated newspaper column about the death of another company commander, Henry Waskow. In *Wartime*, Paul Fussell uses that column to deflate Pyle as a sentimental propagandist, who never let too many facts of war get in the way of his messages to the American heartland. But that column described to me the numbing agony of what it was like to lose a friend in the war. It could just as easily, I sensed, have been written about the death of Bob Fowler. E. B. Sledge, a memoirist Fussell much admires, wrote similarly about the death of his marine captain: "Our company

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commander represented stability and direction in a world of violence, death, and destruction. Now his life had been snuffed out. We felt forlorn and lost. It was the worst grief I endured during the entire war. The intervening years haven't lessened it any." Or as Pyle quotes one of the soldiers passing the corpse of Captain Waskow: "God damn it to hell anyway."

My driver Paul and I left the mouth of the Ilu and drove south of Henderson Field to see Edson's Bloody Ridge and the terrain of the upper Lunga River. From this savage no-man's land, the Japanese had launched repeated attacks against the airstrip. Edson's Ridge, a whale-shaped hillcrest, was another of the fortified positions that the Japanese were unlucky to strike. Even though a few of the enemy broke through to the airfield, most were killed or turned away in hand-to-hand night combat that my father remembers as a distant, flare-lit rumble in which, to his great relief, his company was spared any action.

Edson's Ridge overlooks the airfield and the expanse of Iron Bottom Sound. If Guadalcanal was Gettysburg in the Pacific, this was Little Round Top. It is capped with one of the few historical markers on the island, a white obelisk as modest as the rock in the Pennsylvania woods that remembers the 20th Maine. But the rest of Guadalcanal that we saw, except for the Japanese war memorials on Mount Austen, was uncharted, at least historically. The only way to imagine what happened, even with a guide, was to evoke the books written about the island. It turned a trip to a battlefield into one of those walking tours that visits the houses of great writers.

Guadalcanal has inspired a small library of fiction and nonfiction, much of which lined the shelves where I grew up. In early 1943, almost before the fighting had ended, *Guadalcanal Diary* by Richard Tregaskis and *Into the Valley* by John Hersey were published, helping to fuel the legend that was growing. Samuel Eliot Morison devoted a volume to the importance of its sea battles in his naval history of the war. James Jones used Guadalcanal as the setting for *The Thin Red Line*, although he created a fictional landscape. As he wrote in the foreword: "To have used a completely made up island would have been to lose all of these special qualities which the name Guadalcanal evoked for my generation."

I understand why my father holds James Jones in high regard. He writes about a rifle company—even a C Company—during the early months of the campaign. "He got it right" is the phrase that conveys the adulation. He describes the company with the clinical, pinpoint accuracy that Herman Melville uses to convey life aboard a whaler. Men foul themselves in fear, laugh at ghastly wounds inflicted on the enemy, learn to fight as if this were one of the Indian wars, and, when they least expect to, show courage or cowardice. And Jones writes in the crisp, purposeful

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language that is the best expression of the clarity of American thought at mid-century. The prose is brutal, sardonic, pessimistic, witty, and always to the point. The intervening years may have softened the tone, but the voice I hear in Jones is one that, at times, I can recognize in my father's accounts of the war.

Unfortunately, I came to Jones after reading a number of Vietnam novels that he inspired. As a result, the graphic descriptions of combat and the absence of heroes were familiar. Incompetent command is a given in Vietnam novels, hardly the revelation that it must have been in Jones. I had expected *The Thin Red Line* to be the definitive book on Guadalcanal. Instead I found it dated. I could appreciate Jones as one of the masters of war fiction and that this was a novel about more than a South Pacific battle. But it belonged to a generation that was not mine.

Mostly I am drawn to the books that in some way tell me literally what it was like for my father on the island. Often these are memoirs, like that by Manchester or another by Herbert Merillat, whose diary of the fighting, published in *Gaudalcanal Remembered*, fleshed out incidents of the battle that I only knew in fragments. Of the Henderson Field shelling on the night of October 13–14, Merillat wrote: "The shelter shook as if set in jelly." Although *With the Old Breed* is not about Guadalcanal, E. B. Sledge's recollections of fighting with the First Marines in subsequent campaigns on Peleliu and Okinawa are so vivid that they encompass the earlier battle as Siegfried Sassoon's remembrances of the Somme stand also for Passchendaele and Verdun.

But it is not only memoirs and novels that can explain to a son his father's war. *Acts of War* by the Sandhurst historian Richard Holmes describes the sociology of battle, with each chapter covering a subject such as what it is like to endure artillery fire, alcohol and combat, why men desert, or what it is to be wounded. The writing is a lively juxtaposition of literary allusions and eyewitness accounts. In explaining that men fight, not out of hatred of the enemy, but to maintain the respect of their peers, Holmes marshals evidence from Vietnam, the Falklands, the Civil War, and even the holy wars. He writes that the death of a friend is often what ignites an atrocity and quotes, among his examples, the passage from Manchester on the death of Bob Fowler.

That there were bad books about Guadalcanal was another early lesson. The one always mentioned was *Guadalcanal Diary*, written by Richard Tregaskis, a newspaperman. He landed with the marines in the early waves, spent almost two months on the island, and then returned home to write what became a best-seller and a popular movie. Tregaskis's shortcoming was that, as a reporter, he was free to leave the island at any time. Everyone else had to stick around until they were killed, wounded, taken prisoner, or relieved. In a stock story about

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Tregaskis, my father recalls seeing him once, from a distance, riding in a general's jeep. That was strike two: how could a general understand anything about the front lines? After a while, Tregaskis evolved into a cautionary tale. He inhabited one world, interviewing generals and riding around in jeeps; in the other were the men of my father's company, some being shot and others dying of dysentery. The fable divided the world between observers and participants. "We had no choice; we had to stay" was the refrain that defined the participant world. It also laid bare one of the great paradoxes of the war. I am sure my father hated the miseries of Guadalcanal and longed to leave the place. But if leaving meant letting down his men or departing the arena for the box seats, then he was happy to stay.

Ironically, another correspondent, John Hersey, wrote a book that my father praises as the finest on the fighting along the Matanikau River, where Paul and I ended our drive. The subtitle of *Into the Valley* is *A Skirmish of the Marines*, and it is to war what the *Elements of Style* is to writing—a concise primer.

The Matanikau flows into the Sealark Channel through what is now Honiara. But during the war it marked the western edge of the wild frontier between the Americans and the Japanese. My father still shudders ever so slightly when discussing it. He likes to quote Daniel Boone's phrase about Kentucky, "a dark and bloody land." Merillat calls it "sinister." Hersey writes that it was like "diving into a dark, stagnant pool," and that it was "a maze of ridges fringed with scallops of jungle."

The Matanikau does not have the jungle look of a rain forest, but it does look like an angry sea where the waves have petrified into sharp hills. Such a landscape offered each side wonderful opportunities for ambushes, and *Into the Valley* describes one that engulfs a company of marines. Pinned down and bloodied, the men retreat, perhaps not with the haste of those in the *Red Badge of Courage*, but in the same direction.

During a lull Hersey asks a group of soldiers what they are fighting for. No one really wants to answer the question. Nor does anyone advance any theories on the geopolitical balance in Asia. Finally one whispers, "Jesus, what I'd give for a piece of blueberry pie." Hersey does his best to extrapolate that what the men are really fighting for is "to get the goddamn thing over and get home." But when *Into the Valley* was reissued in 1989, Hersey returns to this passage: "If you ask how a nation could win a war whose soldiers would opt for apple pie rather than a chance for heroic death, I would be inclined to answer that this is one of the main reasons why our side won. There was a lifesaving skepticism and irony embedded in the confused courage of men bred to free choice."

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In his own writing, my father never says why he is fighting. Like many, he was drafted and decided to enlist in the marines as an officer before being swept into the army as a private. He talks about getting it over, about getting home, as if he is on an extended business trip. But he also often draws a connection between his enlistment and two childhood summers spent on a bicycle in Germany. By chance he saw Hitler beside the illuminated columns at Nuremburg and Jesse Owens win at the Olympics. He also saw from one year to the next the rise of anti-Semitism in the towns where they were riding, and he would speak about how he believed war was inevitable—and given what he was seeing, probably necessary.

Almost stronger than my father's reasons for joining are his impulses to speak about what happened during the fighting. Over the years we have had numerous conversations about the war. They come up at odd times and go into great detail about this action or that officer. Part of his eagerness to talk must be to keep alive memories of those like Bob Fowler or to make sense of events—like the fighting along the Matanikau—that at the time must have seemed senseless. But it also seems akin to the need among Holocaust survivors to bear witness, to make it clear what all wars are about. Hersey, who saw not only Guadalcanal, but the ruins of Hiroshima and Warsaw, reflected in the foreword of *Into the Valley*: "One of the things I learned was that war makes no national or racial or ideological distinctions as it degrades human beings."

I have always felt grateful that my father was willing to talk about his war experiences. Paul Fussell writes that many veterans were numb after the war and reluctant to tell the truth about what happened to them. Fussell believes that a consequence of such silence is a national illusion about the reality of combat. "Now, fifty years later," he writes in *Wartime*, "there has been so much talk about 'The Good War,' the Justified War, the Necessary War, and the like, that the young and the innocent could get the impression that it was really not such a bad thing after all. It's thus necessary to observe that it was a war and nothing else, and thus stupid and sadistic." Ironically, it was my father's war stories that first created and later took away a most cherished childhood illusion, that of the Good War.

That evening at the Mendana Hotel I was conscious of how my time on Guadalcanal had differed from that of my father. Tired from the long, hot day, I could take a swim, have a beer with dinner, and sleep in an air-conditioned room. I did not have to flop alongside a trail or wonder if an artillery shell would find me in an inadequate foxhole. I had even greater admiration for anyone who spent time on the island, even the maligned Tregaskis.

Darkness spread quickly after sunset, as did the mosquitoes that

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followed me on an after-dinner walk I took to a bridge over the Matanikau. Looking along the cavernous riverbank, I was reminded of the last sentence in *Wuthering Heights*, when the narrator, standing over a grave site in the moor, wonders "how anyone could ever imagine unquiet slumbers for the sleepers in that quiet earth." On the way back I passed a few pieces of rusting artillery in front of municipal buildings. Otherwise nothing is a reminder of the battles or makes the connection between this stream and a similar one at Antietam. In the semi-official history of monuments and driving tours, it appears a blank slate. Only books such as Manchester's and Hersey's, or the stories of the many fathers who served here, keep it alive.

History

KELLY CHERRY

It is what, to tell the truth, you sometimes feel
That you have had enough of, though of course
You do not really mean that, since you recall
It well enough to know things could be worse
And probably are going to get that way
But still want a long and memorable life, which means
Having to learn more of it day by day,
The names and dates of all the kings and queens
And those less famous who ruled the territory
Known as your heart and now are gone, by one
Dark route or another, from the plot of your story.
But you write on, and are your own best Gibbon,
And read on, this monumental subject being
The decline and fall of almost everything.

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Unveiling

LINDA PASTAN

In the cemetery
a mile away
from where we used to live
my aunts and mother,
my father and uncles lie
in two long rows,
almost the way
they used to sit around
the long planked table
at family dinners.
And walking beside
the graves today, down
one straight path
and up the next,
I don't feel sad
for them, just left out a bit,
as if they kept
from me the kind
of grown-up secret
they used to share
back then, something
I'm not quite ready yet
to learn.

✪ LINDA PASTAN is the author of seven volumes of poems. Her most recent volume is *The Imperfect Paradise.*

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Victorian Philanthropy

The Case of Toynbee Hall

GERTRUDE HIMMELFARB

JANE ADDAMS VISITED LONDON for the first time in November 1883. She was escorted through the slums of the East End by a "city missionary," as she referred to him—perhaps a member of the London City Mission, which had been preaching and practicing the "social gospel" in the East End for half-a-century, or perhaps of the more recent Salvation Army, an offshoot of the Christian Mission. In any case, this was Jane Addams's first encounter with what her guide called the "submerged tenth."

Writing of this incident in her memoir, *Twenty Years at Hull-House*, Miss Addams recalled the satisfaction of the guide in uttering "the then new phrase," as she put it, the "submerged tenth." In fact, the phrase did not become current until seven years later, with the publication of "General" Booth's *In Darkest England*. Miss Addams did not then meet General Booth, the founder of the Salvation Army who popularized that phrase. Nor did she then meet other prominent members of the London philanthropic community, who could have enlightened her about the "submerged tenth": the Reverend Barnett, vicar of St. Jude's in Whitechapel, who was at that very time planning the establishment of Toynbee Hall, which was to be the model for her own Hull House; or Octavia Hill, whose housing project was in effect a social work program; or Charles Loch and Helen Bosanquet, who practiced the new "science" of charity developed by the Charity Organisation Society; or Charles Booth (no relation to General Booth), who had not yet begun his monumental *Life and Labour of the People in London* but who had just written a private testament affirming his faith in the Comtian "Religion of Humanity"; or Beatrice Webb, who was also smitten by that Comtian ideal and was about to embark on her "apprenticeship" first in social work and then in social research; or any of the other "men of intellect and property," as Beatrice Webb put it (using "men," of course, in the

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familiar generic sense), whose social consciousness had been aroused and who were devoting their lives—literally, their lives, not merely their money—to the "service of humanity." On subsequent visits to England, Miss Addams was to meet many of these people, but never the one person whom she might have found especially congenial, Arnold Toynbee.

This was most regrettable—regrettable not only that she never met the man who inspired Toynbee Hall and thus Hull House, but that she could not meet him because he had died earlier that year at the tragically young age of thirty. Shortly before his death, Toynbee had delivered a lecture criticizing Henry George's *Progress and Poverty*. The lecture concluded with a passionate mea culpa.

> We—the middle classes, I mean, not merely the very rich—we have neglected you; instead of justice we have offered you charity, and instead of sympathy, we have offered you hard and unreal advice; but I think we are changing. If you would only believe it and trust us, I think that many of us would spend our lives in your service. You have—I say it clearly and advisedly—you have to forgive us, for we have wronged you; we have sinned against you grievously—not knowing always; but still we have sinned, and let us confess it; but if you will forgive us—nay, whether you will forgive us or not—we will serve you, we will devote our lives to your service, and we cannot do more.

These words are often quoted as if they came at the very end of the lecture. In fact they were followed by a few sentences in which Toynbee asked for a quid pro quo from the working classes.

> We will ask you to remember this—that we work for you in the hope and trust that if you get material civilisation, if you get a better life, you will really lead a better life. If, that is, you get material civilisation, remember that it is not an end in itself. Remember that man, like trees and plants, has his roots in the earth; but like the trees and plants, he must grow upwards towards the heavens. If you will only keep to the love of your fellow men and to great ideals, then we shall find our happiness in helping you, but if you do not, then our reparation will be in vain.

Today these passages are likely to offend or embarrass us. We may find them mawkish, hypocritical, condescending, at the very least unpersuasive and unrealistic. To try to understand them as contemporaries did is to come to terms with a culture and society very different from ours—and to come to terms also with attitudes and assumptions on our own part, which may inhibit such an understanding.

There are two criticisms commonly made of Victorian philanthropy. The older, more familiar criticism is that such philanthropy is obsolete and irrelevant, that social problems cannot be solved (or even remedied)

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by small, private, voluntary efforts, but require either substantial legislative and administrative action by the state, or radical institutional and structural changes in the economy. Philanthropy, in this view, is not only irrelevant but counter-productive, since it distracts attention from any real solution or remedy. Moreover, the argument continues, it was as obsolete in Victorian times as it is today, for industrialism from the beginning, and certainly by the end of the nineteenth century, created problems that were beyond the scope of individuals. Unemployment, for example, was not the result of a failure of character on the part of workers or a failure of compassion on the part of employers. And it could not be solved or even alleviated by well-disciplined workers, or well-intentioned employers, or well-wishing philanthropists.

More recently criticism has taken a different turn. The gravamen of the charge now is that philanthropy by its very nature is a self-serving exercise on the part of philanthropists at the expense of those whom they are ostensibly serving. Philanthropy now stands condemned, not only as ineffectual—that is the least of its offenses—but as hypocritical, even immoral.

In place of the original, etymological meaning of "philanthropy"—"love of mankind"—the word is now identified with the love of self. Thus philanthropy is seen as a means of promoting the social status of the philanthropist, who is pleased to serve on boards and attend charity balls in the company of titled or royal personages, and to receive tokens of gratitude and recognition, preferably in the form of a knighthood or peerage. Or it is seen as the occasion for cultivating social connections that result in tangible economic rewards. Or as a way of enhancing the philanthropist's self-esteem and self-approbation; as others respect him more, so he respects himself more. Or as a means (a relatively painless means) of atoning for his sense of guilt, possibly for riches unethically acquired. Or as a passport to heaven, a record of good works and virtues, perhaps to offset some palpably bad works and vices. Or as an opportunity to flaunt one's power and person, even to flaunt one's goodness and selflessness. Or as a combination of these motives, and many others one can readily imagine.

So far the argument against philanthropy has the effect of impugning the character of philanthropists but not necessarily discrediting their work; they may have done good in spite of themselves. But there is another dimension to this argument which does reflect upon the work itself. If philanthropy is seen as serving the interests of individual philanthropists, so it may be seen as serving the interests of their class, the middle class or "bourgeoisie," as a Marxist would say. Among historians this thesis goes under the name of "social control." In professing to help the poor—in encouraging the virtues and habits of

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sobriety, thrift, prudence, diligence, cleanliness, orderliness, self-discipline, self-reliance—the philanthropists, it is said, were imposing upon the poor "values" that were alien to them and inimical to them. Since they were not working-class but middle-class values, the values of the "hegemonic" culture, as it is said, they violated the indigenous working-class culture. And in violating that culture, they undermined the class consciousness and class identity required for an effective working-class politics—that is, for the class struggle. Moreover, these bourgeois values not only deprived the poor of the means of liberation and emancipation; they made them conspire in their own enslavement and exploitation by instilling in them a "work ethic" designed to make them more productive members of the labor force and more docile members of society. Philanthropy, in short, was an insidious exercise in "social control"—a means of controlling the lower classes and ensuring the hegemony of the upper classes.

It is almost impossible to refute this "social control" thesis empirically. There is no evidence one can adduce that cannot be interpreted in these invidious terms. If one philanthropist promoted an educational reform, it was because educated workers were more efficient (and profitable) than uneducated ones; and if another opposed that reform, it was to keep the poor in a state of ignorance and submission. It is a no-win situation. The only rebuttal is the formal, logical one that a theory which can explain anything and everything, and which is not subject to refutation, is itself specious.

There is another more fruitful way of addressing this issue, by example rather than argument. "For instance," it has been said, is no proof. Yet it is, in a way—or as close to proof as history often provides. Such an example is Toynbee Hall, one of the philanthropic monuments of late-Victorian England.

The first thing to be said about Toynbee Hall is that Toynbee had no part in its founding. Toynbee Hall was established the year after Toynbee's death as a memorial to him. At the time, his wife and some of his friends demurred, pointing out that Toynbee himself had not been involved in the planning or even conception of the Hall, and that his own acquaintance with the East End was limited. (Although he had often visited the Barnetts in Whitechapel, the only time he actually lived in the East End was as a student at Oxford when he spent a fortnight's vacation doing volunteer work for the Charity Organisation Society. The actual founder of Toynbee Hall was the Reverend Samuel Barnett, vicar of St. Jude's, who had long been encouraging young men from the universities to visit and work in his parish and decided to formalize this arrangement by establishing a house where they could actually reside. Yet if Toynbee Hall was not the creation of Toynbee, it was—*pace* his

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wife—a fitting memorial to him, for it was inspired by the idea of "citizenship" that was at the heart of his philosophy.

There is a nice coincidence in the founding of Toynbee Hall in 1884 and the passage that year of the Reform Act that gave the suffrage to most of the working class. In a sense, the suffrage was the formal manifestation of citizenship, and Toynbee Hall its existential realization. For Toynbee, as for his mentor, the philosopher T. H. Green, citizenship was not only the right to vote (although they did not disparage that right); it was also the right and the obligation of each citizen to cultivate his "best self" and to pursue the "common good." This idea of citizenship was related to what Green called "positive freedom." In contrast to John Stuart Mill, Green insisted that freedom was not the "will to do anything and everything," the right of every individual to "do as he likes so long as he does not prevent another from doing so." The individual—or "citizen," as Green preferred—was a "grown man" in civil society who wanted more from freedom than the right to do as he liked—to get drunk, for example. He wanted, and deserved, the freedom to realize his "best self." This was the truly democratic idea of freedom. "When we speak of freedom as something to be so highly prized, we mean a positive power or capacity of doing or enjoying something *worth* doing or enjoying, and that, too, something that we do or enjoy *in common* with others." Every person, not just the superior person, had the capacity to realize his best self, and, in community with everyone else, to realize the common good. Thus freedom, as incorporated in the idea of citizenship, had two essential aspects: the pursuit of the best self and the pursuit of the common good.

It was this philosophy—Philosophical Idealism, as it is called—that Toynbee adopted from Green and that Barnett wanted to realize in Toynbee Hall. Toynbee Hall was to be civil society "writ small," a microcosm of the larger community, a social laboratory which might achieve on a small scale what could not yet be realized on a large scale. On this model of civil society, Barnett, himself a minister of the Church of England, insisted that Toynbee Hall be non-sectarian (which made it especially attractive to the Jews of Whitechapel; by the turn of the century, one-quarter of the students in the university extension courses were Jewish). He also insisted that it was not a "mission" in any sense. The residents were not missionaries bringing the faith to the heathen; nor were they almoners bringing them money, food, or clothes. They were "settlers" who came to live among the poor—"to learn," Barnett said, "as much as to teach, to receive as much as to give."

The idea of community, or fellowship, was the inspiring principle of Toynbee Hall. But it was a community and fellowship for a purpose, to elicit the best in each individual and the best in the community. The

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young men who were residents in Toynbee Hall were expected to give the best of themselves so as to cultivate the best in others. They were to be citizens in the higher sense of the word, fulfilling their own civic obligations by helping those less privileged than themselves to fulfill their better selves. This explains much about Toynbee Hall that might otherwise be thought inappropriate and peculiar.

It explains, for example, why Toynbee Hall resembled a civic and educational institution more than a charitable institution. It did not dispense relief or charity; it dispensed education, culture, and civic amenities. The calendar of educational activities in a typical month included evening classes on arithmetic, writing, drawing, citizenship, chemistry, nursing, and music (one class, for example, was on "18th Century Music—works by Handel, Bach, Scarlatti, etc."); afternoon classes for girls on dressmaking, writing and composition, geography, bookkeeping, needlework, hygiene, reading and recitation, French, singing, cooking, and swimming; and evening sessions devoted to the discussion of legal principles and current social issues. In addition there was a roster of university extension courses that many a modern college might well envy. There were courses on geology, physiology, botany, and chemistry; on Hebrew, Greek, and Latin; on European and English history; and on a wide range of literary subjects—*The Pilgrim's Progress*, Walter Scott, and Browning; on the Elizabethan dramatists Dekker, Lyly, and, of course, Shakespeare (this particular month they were reading *Hamlet* and *The Taming of the Shrew*); on Dante, Goethe, and French literature (Diderot, Molière, and *Hamlet* in French translation).

All this, one must remember, was taking place in the heart of the East End, the poorest section of London. One is not surprised to find that most of the students attending the university extension courses were, as the economics teacher reported, the "best sort" of workers, "steady, thrifty, interested in the improvement of their order"; or that the Latin and Greek students were mainly clerks or small tradesmen, although one was a foreman at the docks. The "Popular Lectures" on Saturday night attracted a wider range of workers who came to hear such lecturers as Charles Booth, who used Toynbee Hall as a source of information for his *Life and Labour of the People in London*; Leslie Stephen, the writer and editor of the *Dictionary of National Biography* (now more famous as the father of Virginia Woolf); Arthur Sidgwick, the Greek scholar, and his brother Henry Sidgwick, the philosopher; Mrs. Humphry Ward, the novelist; A. V. Dicey, the jurist; the Liberal Party leaders, Asquith and Haldane; the socialist Tom Mann; and, before notoriety overcame him, Oscar Wilde.

And then there were all the other activities sponsored by Toynbee Hall: a Shakespeare Society, an Elizabethan Society, a Smoker's club

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where political passions were supposed to be tempered by tobacco, a Travellers' club that arranged trips abroad (this mainly for local schoolteachers), flower shows, concerts, art exhibits (when the paintings and photographs outgrew Toynbee Hall, a special building was erected called the Whitechapel Art Palace), a library open to the public (and utilized by more than 13,000 people each year), and—Barnett's personal favorite, the Children's Country Holiday Fund (in 1888 the fund managed to send more than 17,000 children from the East End to the country for a holiday). The Hall also served as a civic center, a meeting place for trade unions and strike committees, county council and school board officials, social workers and investigators, tenant representatives and other local groups.

In addition, and not least, was Toynbee Hall's residential function. It was home for the fifteen or so young men who lived in it for periods ranging from three months to several years. The Hall has been criticized for serving the interests of the residents better than those of the community. But this is to misunderstand its essential purpose. From the beginning the residential function was given at least as much weight as the communal function; indeed the two were seen as integrally related because they both derived from the idea of citizenship. The young men were to live among the poor so that they would become better acquainted with them, move more easily among them, understand and sympathize with them, and assist them in whatever way they could; but they were not to live the life of the poor or lose themselves in the service of the poor. They were not to be latter-day Saint Francises. On the contrary, they were to show the poor the possibility of a more elevated, more gracious, more fulfilling life, a life that the poor would not be able to emulate but that could, by its example, enrich and enlarge them.

Toynbee Hall was not simply a "settlement house"; it was a "university settlement"—not only because its residents were university men and because it offered university extension courses, but also because it was deliberately constructed (except for its red-brick façade) to resemble a college hall. It contained suites and bed-sitters for the residents, much like those in an Oxford college, a classroom that could accommodate three hundred, a "conversation" room, a drawing room, and a large dining room *cum* library decorated with the crests of Oxford and Cambridge colleges. In this collegial setting—"civilised" but without "undue luxury or display," the architect described it—the residents lived. And here the workers in the neighborhood came to attend classes and meetings, mingling with university men and community leaders, and living, at least briefly, a mode of life very different from their own. (Other settlements founded soon afterwards were named Oxford House, Balliol House, and Wadham House.)

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The residents paid for the privilege of living in Toynbee Hall. And it was regarded as a privilege; not everyone could purchase a residency there. Applicants had to be approved by a committee of residents, were admitted on probation, and had to be confirmed after three months. And the residents were bound by strict house rules that were more reminiscent of boarding schools than of colleges. They dined at specified hours, had a fixed bedtime, and were assigned particular duties. Whether they worked in the East End or pursued careers as teachers, civil servants, or lawyers elsewhere in the city, they were all expected to devote their spare time to communal affairs.

Barnett described them (not ironically) as "clubmen," but their "club" resembled a religious order more than the familiar West End variety. "Toynbee Hall," he wrote, "seems to its visitors to be a centre of education, a mission, a centre of social effort. It may be so; but the visitors miss the truth that the place is a club-house in Whitechapel, occupied by men who do citizens' duty in the neighborhood." When William Beveridge (author of the Beveridge Report, the founding document, as it were, of the welfare state) was sub-warden of Toynbee Hall in 1904, he delivered a paper entitled "The Influence of University Settlements," which was devoted entirely to their influence upon the residents. The paper, he confessed, was a "foolish leg-pull," but it had a serious point, which was that the "essence of the settlement" lay in the "individual lives of the residents, as they are affected by the special experience of living in that particular place." (Jane Addams said of Hull House that it was "more for the people who do it than for the other class." She also explained that her first reason for founding Hull House was to give purpose and meaning to her own life; her second was the desire to help the poor.)

Today these statements would be regarded as evidence of the elitist, authoritarian, self-serving nature of the settlement house, an institution serving the needs and purposes of the social workers rather than of their clients, and designed to imbue the working class with a middle-class culture as well as a middle-class ethic. To Barnett, as to Jane Addams, these statements testified to the democratic nature of the institution. The rich and the poor, they believed, had a common commitment to citizenship and required a common education for that civic vocation. They also assumed that the poor as much as the rich were able and willing to receive such an education because they shared a common human nature. This was what Jane Addams meant when she said that it was important to hold all men to "one democratic standard." And it was what Green meant when he insisted that man by nature—not by class, breeding, wealth, or some special grace, but by simple human nature—was a rational, moral being capable of realizing his best self and pursuing the common good.

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This was also what contemporaries meant when they spoke of the settlement house as a bridge between the classes—the "two nations," in Disraeli's famous metaphor. That bridge was not meant to abolish either class or individual distinctions—distinctions of wealth, occupation, status, or talent. It was meant rather to bridge them, to establish the common denominator of citizenship that made tolerable those other distinctions which were natural and inevitable but which should not be exacerbated and should not be allowed to obscure the common claim to citizenship. The settlement house was not an experiment in socialism; it was an experiment in democracy—which was no mean feat at that time and place.

It is often said that the great achievement of Toynbee Hall (like that of Hull House) was the training of a professional corps of social administrators who later assumed important positions in the departments and agencies of the state—the "social service state," as the forerunner of the welfare state has been called, and then the welfare state itself. One can produce a roster of such names—Beveridge, sometimes known as the "father of the welfare state"; Clement Attlee, the prime minister who actually inaugurated the welfare state just after the war; and a host of others, less familiar today but well known at the time.

No doubt in the early twentieth century Toynbee Hall did serve, in a sense, as a training and recruitment center for the expanding state. But if this was its main achievement, one would have to say that it was a failure, at least from the point of view of its founders. For this was not what they intended, and it was not the spirit that informed it in the first decades of its history. The founders and early residents had no objection to social legislation; indeed they publicly advocated it. In a lecture delivered the year before he died, "Are Radicals Socialists?" Toynbee explained that the Radicals (that is, the Radical faction of the Liberal Party) had already committed themselves to so much of the "Socialist programme"—in the form of factory acts, sanitation and health acts, land acts—that the "continental" form of socialism, which sought to abolish private property, was totally irrelevant to England. Barnett said much the same thing in an article the following year on "Practicable Socialism," which he identified with the Poor Law, the Education Act, the Irish Land Acts, the Artisans' Dwellings Act, the Libraries Act, and the like. But these "socialist" measures, he insisted, were no substitute for the kind of institution represented by Toynbee Hall.

In arguing for the irrelevancy or inadequacy of the settlement house (or the housing projects, or the Salvation Army, or Barnardo's Homes for children, or any other Victorian philanthropy, or, for that matter, any modern philanthropy), critics make it sound as if this particular institution alone was meant to solve the "social problem" or even any one

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aspect of that problem—poverty, or housing, or neglected children, or what have you. In fact the Victorians, no less than modern philanthropists, were acutely aware of the multiplicity of agencies, private and public, which complemented and supplemented one another—and, as often as not, duplicated one another. Almost everyone involved in this philanthropic world was personally associated with not one but several causes and institutions; the result was something like a network of interlocking directorates. This is what Sidney Webb meant when he said: "Nothing in England is done without the consent of a small intellectual yet practical class in London not 2,000 in number." Even the most laissez-fairist representatives of this philanthropic class, the leaders of the Charity Organisation Society, were engaged in organizing and coordinating not only private charities but public relief as well. Others took the initiative in urging various forms of state intervention; Barnett and Charles Booth were among the earliest and most vigorous proponents of a state-financed and administered old-age pension system. But all, including the socialists among them, believed that the expanded role of the state made it all the more necessary to support private, voluntary associations to do what the state could not or should not do. And the main thing the state could not do was what Walter Besant, the Fabian socialist, defined as the principle of the "new philanthropy": "Not money, but yourselves."

This returns us once more to the concept of citizenship as Green and his disciples understood it. A citizen was not a subject—not even the subject of a benevolent state. Toynbee was as opposed to Tory or "paternalistic" socialism, as he called it, as to Marxist or "continental" socialism. He was opposed to both because they both violated the essential principle of citizenship, which was also the essential principle of "positive freedom": that citizens should be free to cultivate their best selves and to pursue the common good.

Historians often use such words as "vague" and "illogical," "ambivalent" and "ambiguous," "transitional" and "half-way house," to describe this generation of philanthropists, reformers, and social philosophers. The implication is that late-Victorian England can only be understood as a prelude to the welfare state (or, as some historians would have it, a prelude to socialism), and that anything short of that was "vague" and "illogical," "ambivalent" and "ambiguous," "transitional" and "half-way." This assumption, that the welfare state or socialism represents the logical, necessary, rational culmination of social policy, is a typical symptom of what has been called the "Whig fallacy"—the tendency to read the past in the light of the present, to see history as a "progressive" movement of events, institutions, and principles. If most Victorians demurred at a large extension of state control, if they persisted

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in expending their energy and resources on private, voluntary philanthropies, it could only be, the argument goes, because of their commitment to an outmoded ideology or vested interest, or because of a failure of imagination or will, or (in the most sophisticated version of this theory) because the administrative apparatus of the state was incapable of coping with the economic and social needs of the time.

This mode of reading history does justice neither to the past nor to the present. It does not begin to appreciate the Victorians themselves, who gave a good deal of thought to their problems, and more subtle and sophisticated thought than we sometimes give them credit for. There are, in fact, very few criticisms currently made of them that they did not anticipate and try to address—and not only criticisms of their policies and institutions, but of themselves personally, their motives and behavior. Reading their books and memoirs, one is struck by how "modern" so many of them sound, in their sensitivity to accusations (self-accusations, for the most part) of condescension, complacency, callousness, obtuseness, selfishness. This is not to say that they were paragons of virtue or sensibility. But many of them—and most of the more prominent ones—were at least as thoughtful, analytic, and self-critical as their counterparts today.

In one respect they were more admirable than their successors. To use an un-Victorian metaphor, they put their money where their mouths were—and more than their money, their careers and lives. At no other time did so many people of distinction give so much of themselves to good works. To some historians this, too, is seen as a flaw. Just as private, voluntary institutions are regarded as inferior to public, compulsory ones, so the voluntary, unpaid social worker is considered amateurish compared with the paid professional, and the philanthropist ineffectual compared with the government official. It may be argued, however, that the modern mode is not all that superior to the Victorian one in practical terms, and far less superior, less estimable, in personal and moral terms. Professionalization, as we have painfully discovered, breeds bureaucratization, and both produce their own peculiar varieties of inefficiency and insensitivity.

If Whig history does less than justice to the past, it also does more than justice to the present. Have our present "progressive" social institutions and arrangements given us that much cause for self-congratulation? Are we so confident of the superiority of our own system of welfare that we can afford to be condescending to the Victorians? Are we so satisfied with the results of the welfare state (to say nothing of socialism) that we can fault the Victorians for not proceeding more vigorously in that direction? Is the situation of our own "underclass" so much better than that of the "submerged tenth" that Jane Addams

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encountered on her first trip to London? And when we agonize over the "social pathology," as we say, of the "underclass"—the break-up of the family, the prevalence of drugs, crime, illiteracy, and illegitimacy, the compulsion for "instant gratification" and the inability to "defer gratification"—are we not implicitly invoking the kinds of "middle-class" values, indeed, Victorian values, with which we reproach the Victorians? It is worth keeping such questions in mind as we pass judgment on those Victorian philanthropists and reformers whom we speak of, rather derisively, as "moralists."

Those Victorians, exemplified by the founders of Toynbee Hall and of Hull House, were avowedly, unashamedly, incorrigibly moralists. They were moralists on their own behalf—they founded Toynbee Hall and Hull House in good part to satisfy their own moral needs. And they were moralists on behalf of the poor, whom they sought to elevate morally, spiritually, culturally, and intellectually, as well as materially—whom, moreover, they assumed to be capable of and desirous of such elevation. To one historian this is evidence of an "authoritarian" disposition. To this historian it suggests an eminently democratic one.

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See Naples and Die

ANTHONY HECHT

It is better to say, "I'm suffering," than to say, "This landscape is ugly."

Simone Weil

I

I can at last consider those events
Almost without emotion, a circumstance
That for many years I'd scarcely have believed.
We forget much, of course, and along with facts,
Our strong emotions, of pleasure and of pain,
Fade into stark insensibility.
For which, perhaps, it need be said, thank God.
So I can read from my journal of that time
As if it were written by a total stranger.
Here is a sunny day in April, the air
Cool as spring water to breathe, but the sun warm.
We are seated under a trellised roof of vines,
Light-laced and freaked with grape-leaf silhouettes
That romp and buck across the tablecloth,
Flicker and slide on the white porcelain.
The air is scented with fresh rosemary,
Boxwood and lemon and a light perfume
From fields of wild-flowers far beyond our sight.
The cheap knives blind us. In the poet's words,
It is almost time for lunch. And the *padrone*
Invites us into blackness the more pronounced
For the brilliance of out-doors. Slowly our eyes
Make out his pyramids of delicacies—
The Celtic coils and curves of primrose shrimp,

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A speckled gleam of opalescent squid,
The mussel's pearl-blue niches, as unearthly
As Brazilian butterflies, and the gray turbot,
Like a Picasso lady with both eyes
On one side of her face. We are invited
To choose our fare from this august display
Which serves as menu, and we return once more
To the sunshine, to the fritillary light
And shadow of our table where carafes
Of citrine wine glow with unstable gems,
Prison the sun like genie in their holds,
Enshrine their luminous spirits.
There, before us,
The greatest amphitheater in the world:
Naples and its Bay. We have begun
Our holiday, Martha and I, in rustic splendor.
I look at her with love (was it with love?)
As a breeze takes casual liberties with her hair,
And set it down that evening in the hotel
(Where I make my journal and entries after dinner)
That everything we saw this afternoon
After our splendid lunch with its noble view—
The jets of water, Diana in porphyry,
Callipygian, broad-bottomed Venus,
Whole groves of lemons, the packed grenadine pearls
Of pomegranate seeds, olive trees, urns,
All fired and flood-lit by this southern sun—
Bespoke an unassailable happiness.
And so it was. Or so I thought it was.
I believe that on that height I was truly happy,
Though I know less and less as time goes on
About what happiness is, unless it's what
Folk wisdom celebrates as ignorance.
Dante says that the worst of all torments
Is to remember happiness once it's passed.
I am too numb to know whether he's right.

II

Over the froth-white cowls of our morning coffee
I read to Martha from a battered guide-book
Which quotes a seventeenth-century diarist,
Candid and down-to-earth, on Naples' whores.
The city, he declared, proudly maintained

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A corps of thirty-thousand registered sinners,
Taxed and inspected, issued licenses
For the custom of their bodies. One may assume
Their number, and the revenues of the state,
Must have compounded since those early days.
There were accounts, as well, of female beggars
With doped and rented children, and a rich trade
In pathos by assorted mendicants.
Baedeker, who is knowing in these matters,
Warns travelers against misguided kindness:
The importunate should be rebuffed with *niente*,
He firmly advises, and goes on to say
That poverty is a feature of the landscape.
Perhaps this strong fiduciary theme
Prompted attention to our own resources.
A six- or seven-year-old good-looking urchin
Had posted himself each day across the street
From our hotel, and from this vantage point
He offered tourists good black-market rates
Of currency exchange. I fell for this
For what, I suppose, are all the usual reasons.
There was first of all the charming oddity
Of a child-financier plying his trade
With such bright confidence. There was my pride,
The standard, anxious pride of every tourist,
Of wishing to exhibit worldly cunning
And not be subject to official rates.
And there was finally the curious lure
Of doing something questionably legal,
Which I could have no chance to do at home.
So I let the boy guide me through dark back alleys
To a small, grim, unprepossessing square,
Festooned with drying sheets and undergarments
Strung like blank banners high above our heads,
The ensigns of our nameless, furtive business.
He motioned me to wait, and disappeared.
There were two men across the square from me,
Conspicuous, vaguely thuggish, badly dressed,
In lively discourse, paying me no notice,
But filling me with a mild apprehension.
I could hear whines of children, the louder wails
Of ambulances on their urgent missions
Somewhere far off, claiming their right of way.
The area smelled of garlic, soap, and urine.

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And then young Ercole made his appearance.
He introduced himself. He was short, dark,
Athletic, with an air of insolence.
He was neatly dressed with very expensive shoes
In which he evidently took some pride,
A complex wristwatch boasting several dials,
And delicate hands decked with a dazzle of rings.
Pride, as it seems, was governing us both.
I felt distinctly uncertain of myself
But saw no way before me to withdraw.
I noticed that as our talk got under way
The men across the square had ceased conversing
And were giving us their full consideration,
Which, given the cautious nature of our dealings,
Was far from reassuring. But Ercole,
Who seemed aware that we were being watched,
Was undismayed, and so I went along.
We came to terms. I had my traveler's checks,
And he had bills of large denominations
Rolled into wads, stuffed in his jacket pockets.
He mockingly let me examine one.
It seemed genuine enough. I agreed to exchange
Two hundred dollars' worth of traveler's checks.
He counted out the bills before my eyes,
Folded them neatly into a thick packet,
And I in turn carefully signed my checks,
And we made our exchange. And then he smiled
A smile of condescension and insolence,
Waved to me with a well-manicured hand
On which he wore a number of gold rings
And disappeared. Throughout this both of us
Knew we had been intensively observed
By the two thugs who stood across the square.
They must have seen the large bulge in my pocket
And I was now certainly too mistrustful
To count the bills once more in sight of them
Or ask of them the way to my hotel.
So I made the return home by trial and error,
And only within the confines of my room
Did I discover that my wad of bills
Was almost wholly folded newspaper.
At first, of course, I was furious; Martha thought me
A gullible fool, which didn't improve my mood.
Two hundred dollars is not a trifling sum,

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But after a while I began to realize
That Ercole's fine clothes were the pathetic
Costume and *bella figura* of the poor.
For him, like other Neapolitan sinners,
Staying alive, the sheer act of survival,
Was a game of cunning I was quite unused to
And involved paying off confederates:
The helpless urchin outside our hotel,
The two thuggish observers, whose mere presence
Had kept me from discovering the fraud
Until too late, and may have distracted me
(I pride myself on being a keen observer)
From the skilled legerdemain of those adept,
Tapered, manicured, bejeweled hands.

III

See, what a perfect day. It's perhaps three
In the afternoon, if one may judge by the light.
Windless and tranquil, with enough small clouds
To seem like innocent, grazing flocks of heaven.
The air is bright with a thickness of its own,
Enveloping the cool and perfect land,
Where earthly flocks wander and graze at peace
And men converse at ease beside a road
Leading to towers, to battlements and hills,
As a farmer guides his cattle through a maze
Of the chipped and broken headstones of the dead.
All this, serene and lovely as it is,
Serves as mere background to Bellini's painting
Of *The Transfiguration*. Five dazzled apostles,
Three as if just awakening from sleep,
Surround a Christ whose eyes seem to be fixed
On something just behind and above our heads,
Invisible unless we turned, and then
The mystery would indeed still be behind us.
A rear-view mirror might perhaps reveal
Something we cannot see, outside the picture
But yet implied by all Bellini's art.
Whatever it is seems to be understood
By the two erect apostles, one being Peter,
The other possibly John, both of them holding
Fragments of scroll with Hebrew lettering,
Which they appear just to have been consulting.

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Their lowered eyes indicate that, unseeing,
They have seen everything, have understood
The entire course of human history,
The meaning and the burden of the lives
Of Samson, Jonah, and Melchizedek,
Isaiah's and Zechariah's prophecies,
The ordinance of destiny, the flow
And tide of providential purposes.
All hope, all life, all effort has assembled
And taken human shape in the one figure
There in the midst of them this afternoon.
And what event could be more luminous?
His birth had been at night, and at his death
The skies would darken, graves give up their dead.
But here, between, was a day so glorious
As to explain and even justify
All human misery and suffering.
Or so, at least, perhaps, the artist felt,
And so we feel, gazing upon a world
From which all pain has cleanly been expunged
By a pastoral hand, moving in synchronous
Obedience to a clear and pastoral eye.
    By this time, having gazed upon as much
Painting in the *Museo Nazionale*
As could reasonably be taken in
On a single morning, we make our way outside
Only to be confronted by the *pompe*
Funebri of six jet-black harnessed chargers,
Each with black ostrich plumes upon his head,
Drawing a carriage-hearse, also beplumed,
Black but glass-walled, and bearing a black coffin
Piled with disorderly hot-house profusions
Of lilies, gladioli, and carnations.
The sidewalk throngs all cross themselves, and Martha
Seems especially and mysteriously upset
In ways I fail to understand until
Back in our room she breaks out angrily:
"Didn't you see how small the coffin was?"
I am bewildered by this accusation.
Of course I *saw*, but thought it far more prudent
To leave the topic delicately untouched.
I am annoyed at her and at myself,
An irritation I must not let damage
What yet remains of this holiday of ours.

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IV

Two days of rain. Confining. Maddening.
From our French windows and our small *balcon*
We watch the cold, unchanging, snake-skinned bay
Curtained by leaden sheets of rain in which
Capri and Procida are set adrift
Beyond the limits of sight, like the *Wandering Isles.*
We are housebound, quarantined. We read and fret,
Trying our best to be cheerful and good humored,
And it occurs to me that only a nation
Devoted to the cult of the Madonna
With all its doctrinal embellishments
Could produce "extra-virgin olive oil."
Martha is not amused by this; the rain
Has damped her spirits, and she has been reading
Grand Guignol sections on Tiberius
In Suetonius' gossipy old book.
The weather itself feels like those steel engravings
Of the *Inferno* by Gustave Doré:
A ruthless, colorless, unvarying gray.
So that when sunshine comes we are astonished,
Filled both with gratitude and with amazement
At the brilliant flowers in the public squares.
We elect to spend the morning simply sunning
In the great park of the *Villa Nazionale,*
And find ourselves almost restored to normal
When we become reluctant witnesses
To a straggling parade of freaks and mutants
From a local hospital for the handicapped
On a brief outing to the aquarium.
They are extraordinary: stunted, maimed,
Thalidomide deformities, small, fingerless,
Mild pigmentless albinos, shepherded
Into a squeaky file by earnest nuns
Between the sunlit bushes of azaleas.
They seem like raw material for the painting
Of Bosch's *Temptation of St. Anthony*:
Wild creatures, partly human, but with claws
Or camel humps, or shrivelled, meager heads.
What they will see inside those glassy tanks
(Thick sullen eels, pale sea anemones)
Will be no odder than what they are themselves.
Martha, who never ventures anywhere

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Without me, and has not a word of Italian,
Has disappeared.
I am deeply alarmed.
It suddenly seemed that she might be the victim
Of some barbaric or unthinkable crime:
That, kidnapped, she was being held for ransom,
Or worse. I hurried back to the hotel,
And found her, deeply shaken, in our room,
Unwilling to talk, unwilling, at first, to listen
To any attempt to soothe or comfort her.
I tried to tell her in what must have been
A way that somehow frightened or offended
That life required us to steel ourselves
To the all-too-sad calamities of others,
The brute, inexplicable inequities,
To form for ourselves a carapace of sorts,
A self-preservative petrific toughness.
At this she raised her arm, shielding her eyes
As if she thought I were about to strike her,
And said *No* several times, not as a statement,
But rather as a groan. And then she gave me
A look the like of which I can't describe.
I left her in possession of the room
And spent the rest of the day pacing the lobby,
Taking my tea alone. She finally joined me
For a dinner at which not a word was uttered
On either side.
What struck me during the meal
(As if confirming everything I'd told her)
Was a vivid recollection from that morning:
Not of the warped and crippled, but of the reds,
Among the pale profusions of azaleas,
The brilliant reds of the geraniums.

V

Somewhere along in here, deeply depressed,
I ceased making journal entries, so what follows
Is pretty much an uncertain reconstruction
Concerning our brief excursion to the baths
Of Nero and the surrounding countryside.
It was intended as a light diversion
Into the realms of luxury and ease,
A little apolaustic interval.

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Were we wrong, I wonder, to expect so much?
I looked at the map, and saw the *Mare Morto,*
And innocently thought of the Holy Land.
We entrusted ourselves meekly to the hands
Of a guide (found for us by our concierge),
An older man of dignified appearance
Who spoke fair English and was named Raimondo.
His smile was reassuring; we were both
Impressed and pleased by his enthusiasm.
Baiae was once a fashionable resort.
Caesar and Nero and Caligula
Had built their summer villas on this coast.
But Nero's baths were desultory ruins,
Tangled in chicory and acanthus growth,
Littered by tourists, and excrement of dogs.
The hills around are honey-combed with caves,
And Raimondo told us with naive excitement
Of the Sibyl's Cave, the old worldly-wise Sibyl
Who cunningly foxed and outwitted Tarquin,
Obliging him to buy her three last books
For the full price of nine by coolly burning
A set of volumes each time he refused.
But first Raimondo had another cave
Picked for our delectation: damp and foul-smelling,
It was, of course, the well-known *Grotta del Cane,*
Known in the ancient texts as *Charon's Cave.*
The brimstone odors here rise from a depth
No one can measure, keeping the very earth
Throughout this region perpetually warm—
So much that when Raimondo cut some turf
With a penknife and handed me a clod
I could feel heat from subterranean fires.
It's to these bottomless thermal wells of warmth
That all this region owes its opulence,
Its endless summer *wo die Zitronen blühn.*
A man and a mongrel now enter the cave,
Answering Raimondo's summons. We are to view
The ghastly and traditional death-scene.
But only after the no less traditional
And ceremonious haggling about fees,
A routine out of *Commedia del Arte.*
And then, by the scruff of the neck, the master forces
His dog's head close to a rank and steaming fissure
Where fumes rise from the earth, the stink of Dis,

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That place of perfect hospitality
"Whose ancient door stands open night and day."
The dog's eyes widen in unseeing terror;
It yelps feebly, goes into wild convulsions,
And then falls limp with every semblance of
Death. Being then removed and laid
Near the cave's mouth, in about thirty seconds
It starts to twitch and drool, then shakes itself,
And presently staggers to its four feet.
With a broad wink and conspiratorial smile,
Raimondo says that by modest computation
That dog dies three hundred times a year,
And has been earning its own livelihood
As well as its owner's for about three years.
This puts it well ahead of Lazarus,
Orpheus, and the others who have made
Sensational returns. As the Sibyl said
Solemnly to Aeneas, "The way down
Is easy from Avernus—but getting back
Requires a certain amount of toil and trouble."
Avernus, as it happens, the stinking lake
No bird can fly across, all birds avoid,
Lies within easy access, as does the Cave
Of Cumean Sibyl, both of which Raimondo
Encourages us to visit, but we insist
That we have had enough of caves and smells
To last us for a while, so he proposes
A little tour of the Elysian Fields,
The region of the blurred and blissful dead.
Virgil had made it seem a lovely place,
A heroes' health club, a gymnasium
Of track stars, wrestlers, athletes, all engaged
In friendly contest, sun-tanned rivalry.
Here, too, convened all those distinguished ghosts
Who had bettered life by finding out new truths,
Inventing melodies or making verses,
At home in a faultless landscape of green meadows
Watered by streams of dazzling clarity.
What we saw was something different. There was, of course,
No fabulous descent to a nether world.
Instead Raimondo took us to a place
Where, we assumed, he meant to let us pause
Before some planned approach to the sublime.
But he said to us, quite lamely, "This is it.

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This is the place called the Elysian Fields."
(I checked his claim that evening in the guide-book,
And the map proved that he had told the truth.)
It was a vacant wilderness of weeds,
Thistles and mulberries, with here and there
Poplars, quite shadeless; thick, ramshackle patches
Of thorny amaranth, tousled by vines.
This wild, ungoverned growth, this worthless, thick,
And unsuppressible fecundity
Was dotted with a scattering of graves
Of the most modest sort: worn, simple stones
From which all carving had been long effaced,
And under which the mute, anonymous dead
Slept in supreme indifference to the green
Havoc about them, the discourse of guides,
The bewildered tourists, acres of desolation.

VI

Marriages come to grief in many ways.
Our own was, I suppose, a common one,
Without dramatics, a slow stiffening
Of all the little signs of tenderness,
Significant silences, self-conscious efforts
To be civil even when we were alone.
The cause may be too deep ever to find,
And I have long since ceased all inquiry.
It seems to me in fact that Martha and I
Were somehow victims of a nameless blight
And dark interior illness. We were both
Decent and well-intentioned, capable
Of love and devotion and all the rest of it,
Had it not been for what in other ages
Might have been thought of as the wrath of God,
The cold, envenoming spirit of Despair,
Turning what was the nectar of the world
To ashes in our mouths. We were the cursed
To whom it seemed no joy was possible,
The spiritually warped and handicapped.
It seems, in retrospect, as I look over
The pages of this journal, that the moments
Of what had once seemed love were an illusion,
The agreement, upon instinct, of two people
Grandly to overestimate each other,

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An accord essentially self-flattering,
The paradise of fools before the fall.
What sticks in the mind, what I cannot escape,
Is the setting in which we found ourselves that day
I first began to see us as outcast:
The ugliness of the landscape, the conviction
That no painter would think it worth a glance.
There are both places and periods in life
That are tolerable only as transitions;
Hell might consist in staying there forever,
Immobile, never able to depart.
Such was the vision I received that day,
Raised, as it chanced, to perhaps the ultimate power
By reading the letters of the Younger Pliny.
His distinguished uncle, the revered old man,
Author of the great *Natural History*
In thirty-seven volumes, was stationed here
On this promontory, just where I had been,
At the time disaster struck. There had been flames
And leaping fires made the more terrible
By the darkness of the night. He was a stout man,
And, from the fumes and smoke, found it hard to breathe.
But he had tied a pillow over his head
As protection against falling rocks and pumice,
And calmly went about to satisfy
His scientific curiosity.
Of all those strange sights the most ominous
Was perhaps the sudden vision of the sea
Sucked out and drained away by the earthquake
That was part of the eruption, leaving a sea-bed
Of naked horrors lighted now and then
By jets of fire and sheet-lightning flares,
Only to be folded back into the dark.
One could make out in such brief intervals
An endless beach littered with squirming fish,
With kelp and timbers strewn on muddy flats,
Giant sea-worms bright with a glittering slime,
Crabs limping in their rheumatoid pavane.

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Other People's History

BERNARD LEWIS

In his famous visionary poem "Locksley Hall," written in 1843, the English poet Tennyson expresses a view, fairly common at that time, of the relative importance of European and Oriental history: "Better fifty years of Europe than a cycle of Cathay." Cathay of course is China, and a cycle of Cathay implies that although the history of China is very long, it consists of meaningless repetition. Europe, in contrast, is a place where things happen, important things, and quickly.

Tennyson was by no means alone in this perception of Oriental history, which one finds widely, indeed, one might even say universally expressed in European writings of the nineteenth century. Let me choose just one other example from the encyclical *Immortale Dei*, issued by Pope Leo XIII on November 1, 1885, in which he congratulates Christian Europe on having "tamed the barbarous nations and brought them from savagery to civility," and on being "the leader and teacher of peoples" in progress, liberty, and the alleviation of human misery by means of wise and beneficent institutions. In the encyclical, the reason for this achievement of Europe is of course that the Europeans adhere to the true faith, whereas the others lack this advantage. Tennyson, writing half a century earlier, had more practical reasons for the supremacy of Europe—"In the steamship, in the railway, in the thoughts that shake mankind," and, more remarkably, anticipated as its ultimate achievement "the Parliament of man, the Federation of mankind."

A similar perception of the relative importance of *our* history and *their* history can be seen in the apportionment of space and attention in some kinds of European historiography. If we look for example at one of the major historiographic achievements of the nineteenth century, the famous *Histoire générale*, edited by Ernest Lavisse and Alfred Rambaud, published in Paris between 1892 and 1901 in twelve volumes containing 291 chapters, we find that there is a fairly good coverage of the ancient Middle East, seen as our own background, in volume 1, after which there is one chapter on the medieval Arabs, three on the Ottoman Empire, two on India, six on the Far East—which does relatively well, getting almost as much space as Holland or Scandinavia—while the rest of Asia including Iran and others are merged into three general chapters on Asia. There is one chapter on North Africa and one on the rest of Africa devoted mainly to the partition of that continent between the European powers. This is a representative example of how the nineteenth-century European historian saw history, saw the world. It is rather worse than the eighteenth century—less self-assured, more respectful of others—when the famous English *Universal History* devoted four volumes to biblical and ancient Middle Eastern history, eleven to Greece and Rome, twenty-seven to Europe and European settlements and activities abroad, and fifteen to the rest of the world.

Since then there has been some improvement in Western perspective, but the cycle of Cathay approach to Oriental history is by no means obsolete. A very distinguished English historian not so long ago spoke rather dispar-

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agingly of non-Western history as "the meaningless gyrations of picturesque barbarians." If I may be permitted a personal recollection, I remember the hard struggles that we had in my home university to persuade our colleagues to give a little more time and a little more attention to non-Western history. My colleague the professor of Anglo-Saxon history, that is, the history of England before 1066, was particularly insistent that far too much attention was already being given to what he called "peripheral subjects." I asked him whether he thought that the history of Europe, Asia, and Africa was peripheral to the British Isles, to which he replied very firmly, "In terms of the interest and needs of our students, yes, I would say just that." This was of course also the prevailing attitude in non-Western civilizations, none of which made much attempt to study Western history until the West invaded them.

The question that opponents of the study of non-Western history usually put is: Why should *we* study *their* history? At first the question was usually asked with the implication that it wasn't worthwhile to do so, that there was simply nothing of value. Nowadays one doesn't hear that argument very often. It has been dropped either from conviction or more probably through fear of the quite severe penalties that the academic world can impose for offenses against the prevailing orthodoxies. The argument more frequently heard now is that it is not our business; it is not relevant—a word with new and sometimes menacing implications—to our needs or concerns or purposes.

However, despite some opposition and much indifference, there have always been some in the Western world, since the High Middle Ages, who did concern themselves with non-Western history. Even Tennyson, whom I quoted earlier, begins his poem "Locksley Hall" with these lines:

> Comrades, leave me here a little while, as yet 'tis early morn;
> Leave me here and when you want me sound upon the bugle-horn.

Any Arab or Arabist familiar with the ancient Arabian odes will at once recognize the source of this opening; indeed Tennyson's son, in a memoir, said: "I remember my father saying that Sir William Jones' prose translation of the Moallakat . . . gave him the idea of the poem." Even Lavisse and Rambaud pay some attention to non-Western history, and although most of what they provide was written either by Lavisse or by Rambaud, some of it was indeed written by Western specialists on non-Western history, notably the chapters on the Far East, which are really quite professional.

There has been, from early times to the present day, a very vigorous tradition of the scholarly study of the East in Europe. Those specialists who, in spite of objections from within their own society, nevertheless thought it worthwhile to make an effort and devote themselves to the study of non-Western history and culture, are nowadays often confronted with a somewhat differently formulated question, which comes not from within but from outside, from the non-Western peoples themselves, or if not from them, then from others presuming to speak on their behalf. This time the question is not why should *we* bother with *their* history, but rather what right have *you* to study *my* history? It is my property. If you concern yourself with it, you are an intruder. A nice example of this attitude, from a source that is non-Western in a different sense, was reported in the press in August 1989. On the anniversary of the intervention by the Soviet government and its Warsaw Pact allies in Czechoslovakia in 1968, statements were issued in both Poland and Hungary expressing disapproval of this action and contrition for their involvement in it. This brought an immediate rejoinder from Czechoslovakia, where the regime installed by the intervention still ruled, in the form of a resolution of the Czechoslovak parliament:

> The assessment of Czechoslovak history is the exclusive right of the nations of Czechoslovakia, and Czechoslovak deputies insist on this right being respected to the full extent.

That is perhaps a reductio ad absurdum of this philosophy, but it is by no means a unique or untypical case. In that case the motivation was clearly political and ideological. It usually is. Sometimes there are other variants. Recently I came across an article in a Kuwaiti newspaper discussing a certain Western historian and saying that he is not competent to write the history of the Middle East for

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three reasons—he is not an Arab, he is not a Muslim, and he is a Jew. The writer then goes on to suggest that since the author in question is of English and Jewish background, he should confine himself to writing English and Jewish history.

This kind of criticism is often accompanied by very harsh, even coarse, language, and has given rise to a new term of abuse, the word "Orientalist." This was a word originally coined, on the pattern of Hellenist or Latinist, to denote a certain type of predominantly philological and textual scholarship, concerned with texts emanating from the Orient. Because of its imprecision regarding both the method and object of study, the term was abandoned by scholars engaged in these studies. It was however salvaged and reconditioned and turned to a new purpose. It now connotes a predatory, one might even say a larcenous, interest in other people's cultural possessions. According to this view Orientalism is the intellectual arm of imperialism. Behind the necessarily false display of detached and objective scholarship, the real purpose of the scholarly study of the other is to subjugate, dominate, and exploit. Exponents of this view say in effect: "You have robbed us of our present. You have endangered and perhaps irretrievably compromised our future. Now you want to invade and pillage our past."

This perception has given rise to a kind of intellectual protectionism: control of access to resources and markets, limitation of imports, and of course, as with any protectionist policy, the payment of duty. Some conditions or requirements, relating not to why but to how the study is pursued, are eminently reasonable, even necessary: that the scholar should be competent, i.e., should possess the appropriate knowledge and skills; that he should be fair, i.e., that he should study and interpret other cultures by the same standards and criteria as his own, without prejudice or condescension or—one might add—idealization; that his scholarship should not be designed or even trimmed to serve some non-scholarly purpose, whether religious or national or ideological or other. Scholars like the rest of humankind are entitled to their beliefs and loyalties and purposes, but these should not distort—even if they inspire—their scholarship. Failures of scholarship in these respects are usually detected and criticized by other scholars, both from inside and outside the culture studied.

Stated in this form, such considerations are of no importance to those who believe that all scholarship, or rather all scholarly discourse, is ideological, and that their ideology, and therefore their scholarly discourse, is better or stronger because it is openly avowed and, more especially, because it is theirs. For these critics, the same piece of Orientalist writing, informed by the same scholarly method, may be good or bad, depending on the identity—and for some, though not all, the origins—of the author, and the motives rightly or wrongly attributed to him. Acceptance may be won by the payment of duty.

Often, the demand for payment of duty presented by or on behalf of the rightful owners of the history has little to do with scholarship, whether of the kind that claims to be objective, or of the kind that proclaims itself to be committed, but might run something like this: "You want to study in my archives, read my literature, talk to my people, work on my history? Then you must pay your respects to my point of view, you must promote my national aspirations as I may from time to time define or redefine them." To comply with this requirement, the historian must choose for himself and demand of others a presentation of history that includes only what in the present climate of opinion is seen as positive and excludes, and if called upon denies, anything that in the present climate of opinion is seen as negative. And of course, since the climate of opinion changes from time to time, the requirements will change accordingly. Interestingly, those who make this demand are very rarely themselves historians or indeed scholars working in these fields. Such complaints in the Arab lands, for example, do not normally come from practicing historians who, generally speaking, form one scholarly community with their colleagues in Western countries, reading, citing, using and often translating each other's works, disagreeing, if they disagree, about texts or interpretations or analyses as scholars disagree, without abuse and without imputation of bad faith. Many of the most maligned works of Orientalism have, for example, been translated and published in the Islamic Republic of Iran, as well as in several Arab countries. The critical assault comes principally from political activists, polemicists, propagandists,

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and some journalists, and more from expatriates than from those who are still in these countries.

The two questions confronting the Westerner who looks at non-Western cultures—"Why should we bother?" and "Have we the right?"—are especially serious for those of us who have devoted our lives, or plan to devote them, to these studies. Have we really misspent our time and effort in the attempt to study, to understand, to interpret other cultures? Was it all just a useless digression, as some would tell us, or an unwarrantable intrusion, as others maintain? These questions become particularly acute at the present time when, if we don't study and teach other cultures we are called arrogant and ethnocentric, and if we do we are accused of spoliation and exploitation.

One answer to this dilemma, more often assumed than stated, is that while we may, indeed must, study our own heritage critically, we may do this only to our own and no one else's. As far as other cultures are concerned, the critical approach is forbidden to us, and we must be content to receive what the legitimate heirs of those other cultures select, prepare, process, and present for our instruction. Critical study, if and when it comes, will be their duty or rather prerogative.

To take a specific example: we may, indeed we must, study the history of Atlantic slavery and expose this great shame in the history of the Western world and of the Americas north and south, in all its horror. This is a task which falls upon us as Westerners and in which others may and should and do join us. In contrast, however, even to mention—let alone to discuss or explore—the existence of slavery in non-Western societies is denounced as evidence of racism and of imperialistic designs. The same applies to such other delicate topics as polygamy, autocracy, and the like. The range of taboos is very wide.

It is a curious fact that both these questions "Why should we . . . ?" and "Why do you . . . ?" have only been put to Western civilization and to no other. Why does a civilization study another civilization? Why do people adopt certain foreign, even dead, languages, from another civilization and teach them in their schools and universities? In the past, generally speaking, it has been that they saw the bearers of this other civilization as their masters in one or the other sense of that word—that is to say, either masters as teachers or masters as rulers. The Romans thought it instructive to learn Greek; the Greeks found it expedient to learn Latin. The Greeks were the teachers of the Romans, but the Romans were the rulers of the Greeks. In the same spirit, Japanese and Koreans learned Chinese, Persians and Turks learned Arabic, and in modern times vast numbers of people have learned English—but only English, not Anglo-Saxon. Interest in early European texts is, except in Japan, at best minimal, and we have yet to see any translations comparable in interest and impact with Sir William Jones's translation of the *Mu'allaqat* of ancient Arabia from which Tennyson got the idea of "Locksley Hall."

Civilizations, in their educational systems, usually teach the languages of their classics, of their scriptures, and of government, later of business. In contrast to this general pattern, Europeans at one time or another have studied virtually all the languages and all the histories of Asia. Asians did not study Europe. They did not even study each other, unless the way for such study was prepared either by conquest or conversion or both. The kind of intellectual curiosity that leads to the study of a language, the decipherment of ancient texts, without any such preparation or motivation is still peculiar to Western Europe, to its daughters such as America, and to its disciples such as Russia and Japan. Those who do not share this curiosity are puzzled by it and naturally respond with incomprehension and suspicion. Since there is no intelligible motive, there has to be some ulterior motive. The crudest example was the response to the first archaeologists who went to dig up the remains of ancient pagans and who were generally assumed to be digging for buried treasure. Why else would one spend blood and treasure and effort in digging up ancient remains? Another charge often brought against archaeologists is that they were spies. Some of them did indeed serve their governments in intelligence, usually in wartime and against one another, but as an explanation of the Western archaeological enterprise, espionage hardly suffices. More recent explanations have gained in sophistication if not in accuracy.

Why then did we of the West engage in these studies and why did those who grew up in non-Western societies not engage in these

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studies? Both sides adduce what one might not unfairly call obvious answers. An answer often given by Westerners is that higher civilizations study lower civilizations and not the other way around. A current non-Western answer is that knowledge is power and that the purpose of Western study was domination and exploitation.

Both answers meet a famous description by H. L. Mencken, who said that for every one of the great problems of life there is an answer—simple, plausible, and wrong—to which one may add, for these two explanations, a fourth common quality, self-serving. Both answers are false and fail on the simplest chronological tests. Even at a time like our own, when narrative history, *l'histoire évênementielle*, has been decried and discredited, it is still not generally acceptable to ascribe previous events to subsequent causes.

The first explanation, that the higher studies the lower, does not correspond to the facts. At the time when the European study of Islam began in the Middle Ages, Europe was manifestly lower and the Islamic world was manifestly higher. The civilization of Muslim Spain, North Africa, and the Middle East was in every significant field of human endeavor vastly more advanced than the relatively backward societies of Europe. Yet, at that time, the West studied Islam. Islam did not study the West.

The second explanation, that the Orientalist studies the Orient as the predator studies his prey, is no better. For a thousand years of Muslim advance, it was not the Westerners but the Muslims who were the invaders and conquerors, first the Arabs, attacking Europe in the Southwest, then the Turks in the Southeast. Both were equally innocent of scholarly designs on Europe. Even the advanced and sophisticated literature of the Arabs in Spain contains few references to the history and culture of their Spanish subjects or their Frankish neighbors. Such flickers of interest as we find are mainly among the Christian populations of Muslim Spain. Even the astute and highly competent makers and rulers of the Ottoman Empire showed only minimal interest in the history or languages of the peoples they had conquered or were planning to conquer.

The "knowledge is power" argument is no doubt emotionally satisfying, to some extent even intellectually satisfying, and it serves a double purpose: on the one hand, to condemn the Orientalism of the West, on the other, to make a virtue of the absence of any corresponding Occidentalism in the East. It also derives a certain plausibility from the fact that in modern times, in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries particularly, it has some relation to reality. But that relationship is narrower and more tenuous than has usually been realized. In England, for example, it was not usually the practice to recruit graduates in Oriental studies into the imperial service. The prevailing opinion seems to have been that they had already been spoiled by their teachers and would be unsuited for such work. The normal procedure was to recruit men with degrees in classics, at that time thought to be the best preparation for governing an empire, and then to send them to special centers to acquire such Oriental knowledge or languages as was required.

There was also a tradition of writing, particularly on history, the purpose of which was unmistakably imperial. One sees this in some early nineteenth-century English writing on the history of India, which quite clearly has a double aim: on the one hand, to confirm English readers in the rightness of their rule in India and of the methods needed to maintain it, and on the other, to discourage Indians from developing dangerous ideas about their own past and consequently about their present and future. But all this was far removed from Orientalist scholarship in the universities. There was a similar literature in France, the purpose of which was to reinforce the French sense of mission and at the same time to discourage any sense of unity or any pride in the past among the North Africans, by presenting the different North African countries as a sort of pulverized ethnic dust inevitably attracted to *la mission civilisatrice de la France*. Again, that particular school of writing in France, though sometimes scholarly and often influential, was outside the Orientalist academic tradition. The only place where academic Orientalism was significantly affected by such purposes was in the Soviet Union under Stalin and some of his successors, in studies devoted to the history and culture of the Oriental republics in Trans-Caucasia, Central Asia, and beyond. These writings were clearly centrally controlled and directed to serve precisely these purposes, to justify Soviet power, and to discourage na-

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tional or religious movements among the peoples of those republics.

There is also another difficulty about the imperialist explanation and that is the chronology. Arabic studies, we are told, were chiefly developed by the British and the French and are closely linked with British and French penetration of Arab countries. Here I would utter a word of warning. English is extensively studied in the Netherlands, and the Dutch are now the second largest group of foreign investors in the United States, ahead of the much discussed Japanese, who come in third place. This is obviously a source of great danger. An American might say of the Dutch, "They master our language, they study our history, they even edit our texts, and sometimes they offer us the supreme insult of doing it better than we do. This, taken together with Dutch investment in North America, is clear evidence of imperialist designs linked with economic penetration."

Farfetched? As a portrayal of reality, no doubt—but as a comparison, surely not. Look again at the beginnings of Anglo-French Arabism in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The first chair of Arabic in France was founded in the Collège de France by King Francis I in 1538. The first French incursion into an Arab country was in 1798. One must say that either the French Orientalists were extraordinarily prescient, or the French imperialists were extraordinarily dilatory. In England, the first chair of Arabic was founded in Cambridge in 1633, the second in Oxford three years later in 1636. The first British incursion into the Arab world didn't come until the early nineteenth century, in the Gulf and in Aden. The British Orientalists were perhaps slightly less prescient or the British imperialists slightly less dilatory than their French colleagues, but this still leaves a remarkable gap.

In fact, to link the beginnings of English or French Orientalism with imperial expansion suggests one of those alternate universes imagined by science fiction writers. When Francis I established the chair of Arabic at the Collège de France, the Moors had not long previously been expelled from Spain, and it was far from certain that they would not come back. The Turks were still threatening Vienna and had occupied the whole of southeastern Europe. Muslim fleets dominated the Mediterranean, and Francis himself was an eager suppliant for help at the court of Süleyman the Magnificent in Istanbul. Even a century later, when the two chairs of Arabic were founded at Cambridge and Oxford, there were still pashas ruling in Buda and Belgrade, there were still fifty years to go till the second Turkish siege of Vienna in 1683, and the south coasts of England and Ireland were still being raided by Barbary corsairs, carrying off captives for sale in the slave markets of Algiers.

Another difficulty about this explanation is that it leaves out the Italians and the Dutch and the Germans, whose role in the rise of European Orientalism on the whole is rather more important than that of the English or the French. It also fails to provide any explanation for the intensive development of the study of the ancient Orient. What imperial purpose is served by deciphering the ancient Egyptian language, for example, and by restoring to the Egyptians knowledge of and pride in their own past?

This still leaves us with the question, why did we in the West do this in the past, and the more pressing question, why should we do it in the future? On the first question I can only offer some tentative suggestions. Christian Europe needed, from the beginnings of civilization on this continent, to look outward and to learn exotic and difficult languages in order to approach the mainsprings of its own faith and its own civilization. Its holy scriptures were written in Hebrew and Greek, with a few pages in Aramaic; three difficult languages, two of them non-Western, all written in strange and different scripts. The holy places of Christianity were in the Middle East; places of pilgrimage, the taking of which by Islam from Christendom inspired a deep sense of loss. Muslims had no such need and felt no such stimulus. Arabic was the language of scripture, government, commerce, and of everyday life, over a vast area. Islam had no holy places in Europe.

A second element, which should not be underrated, was fear. We tend nowadays to forget that for approximately a thousand years, from the advent of Islam in the seventh century until the second siege of Vienna in 1683, Christian Europe was under constant threat from Islam, the double threat of conquest and conversion. Most of the early Muslim converts west of Iran and Arabia were converts from Christianity. Most of the new Muslim domains were wrested from Christendom. Syria,

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Palestine, Egypt, and North Africa were all Christian countries, no less, indeed rather more, than Spain and Sicily. All this left a deep sense of loss and a deep fear. The beginnings of the study of Arabic and Islam in Europe in the High Middle Ages were certainly linked with the fear of conquest and conversion—the need to understand the invader and his faith, with the immediate purpose of preventing the conversion of Christians to Islam and the ultimate hope of procuring the conversion of Muslims to Christianity. It took some centuries before Christian Europeans came to the conclusion that the first was unnecessary and the second impossible. Muslims had no such fear and in consequence felt no such need during the early formative centuries when the character of their civilization was determined.

A third factor was the recognition of Arabic, along with Greek, as a language of science and philosophy. Europeans with a desire to learn could gratify that desire by learning these languages and studying in the schools where they were used. In the formative, early Middle Ages, there was no such attraction, for Muslims, in the languages or schools of Latin Europe.

A fourth factor is the intellectual development of Europe in the ages of the Renaissance, the Discoveries, the Reformation, the Enlightenment, and the scholarly revolution of the nineteenth century. These brought a new humanist curiosity, new scholarly methods and disciplines, new material, and also, through the religious conflicts within European Christendom, new links with the Arab Christians. At a time when Protestants and Catholics were struggling for control of Europe, Catholics, and to a lesser extent Protestants, looked toward the Eastern Christians as a possible source of support. A number of Arabic speaking Uniate and other Christians, from Lebanon, Syria, and elsewhere, traveled to Europe where they became the teachers of the West in Arabic studies, playing a role in the foundation of Arabic scholarship similar to that played by Jews in the foundation of Christian Hebrew scholarship. The Muslims of course had no such contacts in Europe. There were Christians in the Islamic lands; there were no Muslims in the Christian lands. They were expelled sooner or later after the Reconquest.

Another factor in the growth of Orientalist scholarship in the West is the expansion of trade and the development of the bourgeois urban society, which offered both encouragement and opportunity. One of the earliest professors of Arabic at Oxford, Edward Pococke, a very distinguished scholar and one of the major European Arabists of the seventeenth century, spent several years in Aleppo as chaplain to the Levant Company, an English merchant company with a trading post in Aleppo, courtesy of the sultan. Like most scholars in his day, Pococke was a clergyman, and his appointment as chaplain gave him the opportunity to spend a few years in an Arab city and to learn something of the culture as well as the language of the Arabs. In this respect also, there was no comparable opportunity for Muslims in Europe. The various Christian trading nations were permitted to establish trading centers in Middle Eastern cities from Crusading times onwards, with some even before the Crusades. With few and minor exceptions, nothing of the kind was permitted by Europe to Muslims. When in Venice, which lived by the Levant trade, a proposal was put forward to establish an inn for traveling Turkish merchants, there were long and bitter struggles and arguments before the city finally agreed to allow a very small number of Turkish merchants to stay for short periods. And if Venice, the great trading city, was so reluctant to admit even a minimal Muslim presence, others were even less tolerant. Commerce and the opportunities afforded by commerce, and the kind of intellectual atmosphere that arises in a bourgeois society, were surely important elements in the rise of scholarship in Europe.

These are only tentative suggestions, on a subject still in need of further exploration. But let me turn now to my final topic: why should we continue to do so? Why should we persist, in spite of criticism and sometimes even of abuse, in studying other people's civilizations?

There are a number of reasons for that too. There is the obvious practical reason, the need for mutual understanding, whether for political or commercial or diplomatic or even simple human reasons. There is the by now generally accepted need of the social scientist for empirical data from other societies, without which he cannot make usable generalizations about his own. This is the more important at a time when the very vocabulary of

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discussion is structured to impede or obscure comparative analysis. And beyond these practical and methodological considerations, there is also the inherent cultural, moral, and intellectual value of these cultures in themselves. Just as our students should know something about the major classics of Western literature, so they should also know something about the major classics of non-Western literature, because even the understanding of our own Western civilization is distorted and incomplete unless it is seen in a global and not merely in a regional and parochial context. After all, our Western civilization did not spring like Aphrodite from the sea foam. It was enriched by contributions from many different sources, including the Islamic world and even the remoter regions of Asia and Africa. Without a recognition of that diversity of origin, our education and our self-perception are flawed and falsified. The interdependence of human existence at the present time, the unity of human culture, which is becoming more of a fact every day in spite of the political and other differences that divide us, require such mutual study. I stress the word mutual. It is good that our students should study the *Mu'allaqat*; it is also good that Arab students should study *Beowulf*.

In addition to what we might call these cultural and humanistic values, there is another, a more delicate issue, which must nevertheless be confronted. It is in a sense our duty to non-Western peoples, or at least to some of them, to do something that they, for a variety of reasons, are prevented from doing for themselves. Some are practical reasons—lack of resources, lack of good libraries, lack of archival and other research facilities. I remember how, during the many years that I was involved as a member of the editorial committee of *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, we drew our contributors from all over the world, including, of course, Islamic countries. Time and time again the problem arose of a fine scholar in one or another Muslim city who couldn't do an article or had great difficulty in doing an article because there was no adequate library at his disposal. If you live and work in Leiden or Princeton, or any major Western center, it is very easy to assemble the material you need for a piece of research. There are very few places in the non-Western world where comparable facilities exist. This is one of the most acute problems for serious scholarship in these countries.

But that is not the only difficulty. There is also the political difficulty arising from the fact that many, not all, but many non-Western countries are governed by dictatorial regimes which quite rightly feel themselves to be threatened by independent historical research, and which therefore take steps strictly to control the means of production, distribution, and exchange of historical knowledge.

There are also social and psychological pressures. A critical approach to the past is often seen as hostile—from outside as aggression, from inside as treason. There is a demand for recognition of the merits and achievements of the various cultures—a very reasonable request that has too often been denied in the past. But nowadays what is sometimes demanded is recognition not of merit, but of perfection, and that is not a reasonable demand.

Many generations of Indian and Egyptian graduate students went to England, both during and after the days of Empire, to do research on the iniquities of British imperialism in India and in Egypt. They had free access to libraries and archives, and they wrote what they wished to write. Much of what they wrote was in the form of doctoral theses, for which they received Ph.D.'s from British universities, many of them with scholarships provided by the British government. Nobody saw anything amiss or raised any objection. It is one of the rules of a free society that there is such access to libraries and archives, and freedom, even for subsidized students, to present their view of the past as they see it. If their research and exposition met professional standards, they were entitled to their doctorates. One would hope that this view will spread to other parts, and indeed it has spread to some, but by no means to all. There are encouraging signs. I have just come from Istanbul, where I attended an international congress on the economic and social history of Turkey, hosted by a Turkish university. Of 135 papers presented, 80 were by foreigners, many of them from former Ottoman possessions in southeastern Europe, Asia, and North Africa. The Turkish archives are now open to bona fide scholars, and numbers from these countries and elsewhere are already working there. One can only hope that others will follow the Turkish example.

We, as historians in free countries, have a moral and professional obligation not to shirk the difficult issues and subjects that some

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people would place under a sort of taboo; not to submit to voluntary censorship, but to deal with these matters fairly, honestly, without apologetics, without polemic, and, of course, competently. We who enjoy freedom have a moral obligation to use that freedom for those who do not possess it. We live in a time when great efforts are being made to falsify the record of the past and to make history a tool of propaganda; when governments, religious movements, political parties, and sectional groups of every kind are busy rewriting history as they would wish it to have been, as they would like their followers to believe it to have been. All this is very dangerous indeed, to ourselves and to others, however we may define otherness—dangerous to our common humanity. Because, make no mistake, those who are unwilling to confront the past will be unable to understand the present and unfit to face the future.

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Snails

KINLOCH RIVERS

The snail crosses the brick walk;
birds flutter at the feeder;
butterflies make their way to Mexico,
and somewhere beyond the house
the tortoise and the hare
carry out their fable.

The snail carries his house
like some perpetual mortgage
as he moves on his silvery path
from leaf to leaf.

The leaf of the tobacco
was forbidden us as children
because, we were told,
the bodies we carried
were temples of the Lord,

temples, sometimes like hovels
with scratches and sore
sheltering thoughts called impure
by benign tyrants
to keep us in line,

but thoughts, I now see,
of greatest purity, unadulterated
by craft or the deadly sin
of withholding love
as our bodies waste away to eternity.

Morning, twilight, night,
the wind stirs fallen leaves
into drifts like those against our hearts,
and the burrs of the past stick to our souls
and with the houses, temples, hovels upon our backs,
like snails we move across the rough path.

✪ KINLOCH RIVERS, who died last year, was a high school teacher and guidance counselor. His work has appeared in many newspapers and literary journals, including the *Christian Science Monitor*, *South Carolina Review*, and *Sanskrit*.

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Mr. Mencken and the Jews

SHELDON L. RICHMAN

All I care to know is that a man is a human being—that is enough for me; he can't be any worse.
—Mark Twain, "Concerning the Jews"

Since *The Diary of H. L. Mencken* was published this past winter, Henry Louis Mencken, once considered the grand old man of American journalism, a literary critic of historic importance, and one of our most illustrious humorists, has become known as a bigot and in particular an anti-Semite. In the current intellectual atmosphere of high virtue and extreme ethnic touchiness, where a man can be done in by self-appointed heresy hunters for the least unfortunate utterance, the publication of the Mencken *Diary* has brought its author a furious posthumous public beating. In such an atmosphere, for an author, even a long-dead author, to be thought anti-Semitic—or racist, or insufficiently sympathetic to this or that ethnic or social group—can have serious consequences. Such authors are dropped from school curricula, their writings are removed from popular high school and college readers; the loss of their reputation results in a loss of respect for their work. They are cast out, beyond the pale, very much non grata.

The trouble began when Charles A. Fecher, the editor of *The Diary of H. L. Mencken* and hitherto an admirer of Mencken, wrote in his introduction to the *Diary*: "Let it be said at once, clearly and unequivocally: Mencken was an anti-Semite." Most major American newspapers picked up the story and played it big: the *New York Times*, for example, after running a news story also ran two op-ed pieces on the revelations of the *Diary*. Once the book was officially published, reviewers jumped in with an almost gleeful enthusiasm. The castigation of Mencken had gone so far that, in the *New York Review of Books*, a letter appeared signed by, among others, Louis Auchincloss and Ralph Ellison asking that the literary importance of H. L. Mencken not be forgotten and readers bring some historical perspective and understanding to his *Diary*.

But was Mencken an anti-Semite? Let's look at the evidence.

The *Diary* contains roughly thirty references to Jews. Mencken occasionally describes a person as a Jew, at times adding qualifiers, including "shrewd," "brisk, clever," "low-grade," and "young Harvard." He calls a woman a "French Jewess." He once or twice identifies Hollywood with "the Jews." In three other entries he notes, without comment, that Jews could not be members of the Maryland Club, of which he was a member, or be served at a restaurant in North Carolina. In another reference he reports Samuel Eliot Morison's remark that Jews did not make good history students at Harvard. In one entry he tells of how Bernard Smith, sales manager of Alfred A. Knopf, Mencken's publisher, proposed publication of a book of prayers during World War II. Mencken, a third-generation atheist, hated the idea, seeing in it a lowering

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Permission to publish extracts from the works of H. L. Mencken has been granted by the Enoch Pratt Free Library in accordance with the terms of Mr. Mencken's will.

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of quality of the books published by the Knopf firm, of which he, Mencken, was a director, and confided to his diary: "What his [Smith's] name was before he changed it I do not know. He, too, is a Jew, and moreover, a jackass." In another entry, this one not published, but only mentioned by Fecher, Mencken lambastes two businessmen as "dreadful kikes" because they bought a distillery in Baltimore and let the product deteriorate.

Mencken has also been criticized for what is not in the *Diary*. For example, there is no denunciation of Hitler, though Mencken often denounced Hitler in his letters; about all he has to say about Hitler in the *Diary* is that a reporter described him as being "amiable" in private. This entry was made November 11, 1938, the day after *Kristallnacht*, which is also not mentioned.

For Fecher and many reviewers of the *Diary*, it is all quite damning. Moreover, this is not the first time Mencken was suspected of anti-Semitism. It came up in his lifetime and many times before the publication of the *Diary*. At the 1948 Progressive Party convention that nominated Henry Wallace for president, a motion was made to condemn Mencken as a Jew-baiter, among other things. (The chairman refused to entertain it.) In letters and published and unpublished writings, Mencken seemed to vent anti-Semitic feelings. In 1922, while on a ship bound for Germany, he wrote his brother August, "The Jews aboard outnumber the Christians by at least 15 to 1. They all seem to be department store buyers, and it is bad enough to look at them, without speaking to them." In unpublished notes he wrote that "the Jews are everywhere thought of as strangers and hence acquire the obligations of guests." He stated that "the Jew always makes the mistake of trying to regulate the society in which he finds himself." Several times he insisted that the Jews constitute a race, despite denials by Jewish people. (Ironically, some Israelis are now trying to prove that there is a Jewish race.) He argued that the Jewish notion of the Chosen People is partly responsible for anti-Semitism. He wrote that "Jewry as an organized body is almost unqualifiedly unpleasant," and added in another note that "it might be argued plausibly that most of them are inherently incapable of civilization."

Finally, on the prosecution side is Mencken's 1918 introduction to his translation of Nietzsche's *The Antichrist*, published by Knopf. In the middle of his complimenting the Jews for their salutary effects on the rising plutocracy in Europe, he wrote, "The case against the Jews is long and damning; it would justify ten thousand times as many pogroms as now go on in the world." From other Menckeniana and the fact he was introducing Nietzsche, we can deduce that the Jews' offense was the invention of Christianity. This is rough stuff nonetheless, even if it was written years before the Holocaust.

As every judge instructs during a criminal trial, however, the jury must not make up its mind before hearing the defendant's case. But what can possibly be said in Mencken's behalf? Turning to the *Diary* first, we must acknowledge that Mencken indeed sometimes, but not always, identifies Jews as such, though he also identifies others by their ethnic or national origin. He calls the publisher Harcourt a "clever Dutchman," for example. He does indeed abstain from commenting on the restrictive membership policies of institutions. But this is not unusual in the full context of the *Diary*. Mencken moralizes very little in the four-hundred-odd pages published (which is only one-third of the diary he kept for eighteen years, between the ages of fifty and his stroke at sixty-eight). Aside from railing against the impositions of Franklin Roosevelt, the editorial policy of the *Sunpapers*, and his friends who put drink before work, Mencken pronounces few judgments. He clearly did not intend his diary as a running commentary on world events: there is no mention of Pearl Harbor or D-Day; he barely mentions the end of the war. We just cannot deduce much from what is omitted from the *Diary*. What are we to make, for example, of his failure to write anything about the internment of the Japanese-Americans? It surely violated every principle of civil liberty Mencken held dear, and it was the dastardly act of "Roosevelt II" to boot. Yet—silence.

But for those who attack Mencken for omissions in his *Diary*, I have one: nowhere in the *Diary* does he blame the war he hates so much, World War II, on the Jews. In fact, nowhere does he blame "the Jews" for anything. One would expect this of a virulent anti-Semite. Yet, again, silence.

Why should Mencken have used his private diary to denounce Hitler's anti-Semitism? He could—and did—do it in *The American Mer-*

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cury. In his book column in the December 1933 issue, his last as editor, Mencken wrote about *Mein Kampf* and four books on the Third Reich. The article is a trenchant, solid put-down of the Nazis as a gang of demagogues who "harass and intimidate, flay and murder perfectly innocent and helpless people." Noting that anti-Semitism tends to flare up during public turmoil, he wrote:

> The disadvantage of the Jew is that, *to simple men*, he always seems a kind of foreigner. . . . He is commonly a fierce patriot in whatever land he lives in, and he certainly was, at least in most cases, in Germany during the war, but his patriotism is always ameliorated, despite its excess, by a touch of international-mindedness born of his history, and in consequence he is commonly held suspect by patriots *who can't see beyond their own frontiers*. Thus he is an easy mark for demagogues when *the common people* are uneasy, and it is useful to find a goat. . . . In Germany, as in Poland, Austria and France, he has been made use of by demagogues for many years, precisely as the colored brother has been made use of in our own South. (Emphasis added.)

Mencken went on to describe Hitler's association of Jews with Bolshevism as "in large part, imaginary, and at best . . . much exaggerated." Finally, he wrote that Hitler persuaded the "more credulous" of the Germans that the Jews were dangerous. "What followed," he wrote, "was certainly not creditable to the German people, nor indeed to the human race in general," referring to the ensuing "extravagant barbarities." Mencken thought that the Germans were too civilized to do anything but boot Hitler out, but he believed that if that didn't happen, there would be another world war.

By 1933 Mencken was a grizzled veteran in his concern for the Jews in Germany. In 1922 he had visited Germany to survey the damage of World War I and the Treaty of Versailles. In a letter from Munich to Paul Patterson, editor of the *Baltimore Sun*, he wrote, "Germany, so seen, presents a confusing and astounding spectacle. Outwardly everything looks serene (the communist outbreaks reported are chiefly no more than drunken fights), but every intelligent man looks for a catastrophe. If it comes, then there will be a colossal massacre of Jews." Many people foresaw catastrophe in the aftermath of World War I. How many feared it would befall the Jews?

More than a year before his *Mercury* article, Mencken published in the same magazine a piece titled "Theology in the American Courts" by one B. H. Hartogensis. It discussed, with much disdain, the fact that in eleven states of the Union, Jews and other non-Christians could either be barred from testifying in court or have their credibility impeached because they were not Christians. An acquaintance of Mencken's, Hartogensis was a Jewish lawyer and pawnbroker in Baltimore. On occasion he would describe the difficulties Jews had in the legal system of Maryland, one of the eleven states described. Mencken thought this unfair to Jews and asked a colleague on the *Baltimore Sun*, Philip Wagner, to take Hartogensis's facts and ghostwrite the article, which he did. Wagner/Hartogensis blasted "such capricious and irrelevant tests, barring the testimony of unbelievers" as "not merely a denial of justice, but a deprivation of property in conflict with the Fourteenth Amendment"—echoing, surely, the views of Mencken, the self-described "extreme libertarian" who believed in individual freedom "up to the limit of the unbearable, and even beyond." This overriding concern with liberty is what explains Mencken's opposition to the Red Scare of the twenties and his defense of Emma Goldman, the Jewish communist who was deported. For whatever it is worth, Wagner, who knew Mencken well, told me that the aspersions about him are "grotesque hogwash."

It has often been remarked, by Alistair Cooke, for example, that it is not true that some of Mencken's best friends were Jews; rather, *all* of his best friends were Jews. That is only a slight exaggeration. The publishers Alfred and Blanche Knopf, his longtime co-editor and theater critic George Jean Nathan, the publisher and producer Philip Goodman, the advertising executive Joseph Katz, the composer Louis Cheslock were his dearest friends. His beloved Saturday Night Club, which met to drink beer and play music, had Jewish members. He hired Charles Angoff, who was Jewish, as managing editor of *The American Mercury*. Perhaps his earliest collaborator, the physician Leonard Hirshberg, for whom he ghosted medical articles and a baby-care book in 1910, was Jewish. His earliest (1925) biographer, Isaac Goldberg, with whom he worked intimately, was Jewish. Of the two people he allowed to paint his por-

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trait, one, Nikol Schattenstein, was Jewish. The other, Oliver Richard Reid, was black.

Mencken associated so closely with Jews that people often thought he was Jewish. Throughout the twenties he was, to his delight, listed in the *Jewish Who's Who*, never correcting the editors, and G. K. Chesterton actually Jew-baited him, calling him "a clever and bitter Jew" and "a man with a sensitive race and a dead religion." Indeed, Mencken knew Jews as a boy in the Institute of F. Knapp, a Baltimore secondary school run by an old German whose curriculum included Hebrew lessons. (Mencken sat in for a while to learn his *aleph-bet*.) "There was no enmity between the Chosen and the *Goyim* in the old professor's establishment," Mencken wrote in his memoirs in the 1930s, "and no sense of difference in his treatment of them." It was here that Mencken picked up such Hebrew words, which he used reguarly, as *tokos*, *schlemihl*, and *mashuggah*. I find it curious that Mencken writes, "I must add in sorrow that the Jewish boys at Knapp's were unanimously *Chazirfresser*"—that is, pork-eaters who did not keep the dietary laws. Why was he sorry? Irony, perhaps. But there may be something else: Mencken apparently was annoyed with Jews who denied their heritage. Charles Fecher wrote in his introduction to the *Diary* that Mencken and Nathan had personal problems arising "out of what seems to him Nathan's effort to deny, or at all events to conceal, his Jewishness." Recall, too, how, with irritation, he wondered what Bernard Smith's real name was.

One would not expect an anti-Semite to point out the anti-Semitism of others and name it such. Yet this Mencken does twice in the *Diary*. He notes that the novelist Theodore Dreiser engaged in an "anti-Semitic tirade" against a publisher, and after asking the rabble-rouser Gerald L. K. Smith if he was an anti-Semite and Smith denies it, Mencken writes, "I am convinced that Gerald is preparing to get aboard the great anti-Semitic movement now rolling up in New York." That doesn't sound like an anti-Semite talking.

For every letter of Mencken's that calls Jews unpleasant, you can find one that tells his correspondent not to judge all Jews by any particular ones. He may call the Jews impatient, credulous, vain, and touchy, but he also called them a "race of poets." Carl Bode, Mencken's definitive biographer, writes that he "savored Jewish food, appreciated Jewish ritual and customs, and found a Jewish atmosphere congenial."

There is at least one man alive who can testify on this issue first-hand. Lawrence E. Spivak, who was the creator and moderator of NBC's "Meet the Press," became business manager of the *Mercury* after Mencken stepped down as editor at the end of 1933 and soon thereafter bought the magazine. He served as editor and publisher from 1944 to 1950, during which time he frequently published Mencken.

Mencken refers to Spivak twice in the *Diary*. In the December 3, 1934, entry, he writes of attending a special meeting of the directors of the Alfred A. Knopf Company, which at the time owned the *Mercury*. "Lawrence E. Spivak," Mencken writes, "who has been business manager of the *American Mercury* since I cleared out, has proposed to take over the magazine from the Knopf company, and the meeting was called to consider his offer. . . . It seems to me that the offer is a good one, and so I have voted for it.

"Spivak," Mencken continues, "is a young Harvard Jew, who took over the management of *Antiques* after leaving college and made a considerable success of it. Apparently he has no money, but he is energetic and intelligent." He goes on to compliment Spivak's performance at the *Mercury*.

"If he [Mencken] was anti-Semitic," Spivak told me when I interviewed him, "then he went out of his way to punish himself. It is absolutely nonsense to accuse Mencken of anti-Semitism. He always talked with his tongue in his cheek, but he always felt comfortable with Jews. He talked about Jews the way Jews talked about Jews."

Spivak, who is nearly ninety, explains Mencken's identification of people by their ethnic or religious affiliation as simply a manner of the times. "Those things didn't mean very much," he said. "He called me a Harvard Jew. Well, I was at Harvard and I am a Jew. The only real prejudice that Mencken had was pro-German." But Spivak quickly added that Mencken despised Hitler.

"I can remember that Mencken once said, 'I can't understand how any intelligent, civilized person could be anti-Semitic.' If Mencken was anything," Spivak added, "it was a libertarian. He believed in freedom. I just think we throw these things [charges of anti-Semitism] around too loosely."

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Through all the controversy over the *Diary of H. L. Mencken,* no one has taken care to define his terms. What, after all, is anti-Semitism? In *Semites and Anti-Semites*, Bernard Lewis distinguishes "normal prejudice" against Jews from anti-Semitism, which is the hatred of Jews grounded in the belief that they are a malignant influence in the world and should be controlled or eliminated.

If one judges Mencken by his writing and his conduct, the worst that can be said about him is that he held a partly unflattering stereotype of Jews, though it had nothing whatever to do with the malignancy assumed in the anti-Semite's doctrine. As a hard-core empiricist, Mencken must have thought his stereotype proceeded from his experience. As a principled individualist in both method and morals, however, he was ready and even eager to waive the negative part of the stereotype whenever a person possessed the virtues he revered: civility, honesty, integrity, devotion to productive work, competence, humor—the marks of what he called the "superior man." This is how he treated all groups and their members. And it clears up the apparent contradiction between Mencken's attitude toward "the Jews" and his high regard for so many individual Jews. Whatever we may call this, it is surely not anti-Semitism. Ethnic stereotyping is ubiquitous. What separates a reasonable man from a bigot is that the reasonable man looks for grounds to override negative stereotypes, and H. L. Mencken was a reasonable man.

Reasonable and magnanimous. In a letter of 1935 to Benjamin De Casseres, Mencken wrote: "A very definite anti-Semitic movement is gathering force behind the door, and whenever a convenient opportunity offers it will bust out. At that time you may trust me to mount the battlements and holler for the Chosen." More dramatically, in his January 1, 1939, *Sun* column, before there were Nazi death camps and when Hitler was still trying to expel the Jews, Mencken called on the United States to provide safe haven for them. He tore into the people who *talked* about the plight of the Jews without offering to *do* anything. Mencken wrote:

> It would be much more honest and much more humane to tackle the problem at once, and settle it without further ado. Either we are willing to give refuge to the German Jews, or we are not willing. If the former, then here is one vote for bringing them in by the first available ships, and staking them sufficiently to set them on their feet. That is the only way we can really help them and that is the only way we can avoid going down in history as hypocrites almost as grotesque as the English.

The column makes two other points: that the deed should be done quickly to shut up the "Ku Kluxers" and other anti-Semites, and that the American Jews should not be burdened with leading the campaign to amend the immigration quota. "They," Mencken wrote, "have enough troubles already, and are probably doomed to more hereafter." Instead, he continued, "the initiative should be taken by the so-called Christians who are so free with weasel words of comfort and flattery, and so curiously stingy with practical aid. In particular, it should be taken by the political mountebanks who fill the air with hollow denunciations of Hitler, and yet never lift a hand to help an actual Jew."

Later that year, in notes he never published, Mencken wrote, "The most outrageous of all the Nazi doctrines is the war to the general effect that Jews have no civil rights."

How important is the reputation of a man now dead almost thirty-five years? Only as important as truth and justice and clear thought.

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La Belle Américaine

A Modern Love Story

LEONARD KRIEGEL

In March 1981, I hit my car's brakes as the light on the avenue du Maine in Paris turned red. Four Frenchmen in their mid-twenties crossed in front of my car, a 1978 dark maroon Oldsmobile Delta 88, which I had shipped from New York to Le Havre. This was my first real day of driving in Paris, for I had picked my car up the day before. One of the men paused to stare at the rocket emblem on the car's hood. Suddenly, his face reddened, and the middle finger of his right hand pierced the gray Parisian sky as he angrily cried out, "*Américaine!*" before hurrying off to rejoin his friends on the other side of the avenue.

I don't, to be honest, remember exactly what I cried out in retort as the light turned green and I gunned the Olds—probably the French equivalent of "And so's your mother!" It would have been bad enough if my nationality had been under attack, but I knew what had inspired the wrath of that young Frenchman crossing the avenue, and it was not so much my nationality as it was my car. For by 1981 my big American car had been identified as the enemy of automotive engineers and environmentalists alike. Never mind that it was also the lineal descendant of the car that the French had made a very funny movie about twenty years earlier. Never mind that for me my car affirmed my right to master all roads in style and comfort. *La Belle Américaine* was now the enemy.

I was an exchange professor that spring at the branch of the University of Paris drab enough to be more or less reserved for African students, Arabs who had settled in France, housewives, working people, and assorted "others" considered less than properly French or altogether academically sound. My driving destination that morning was an architectural monstrosity in the dreary working-class suburb of St. Denis where the university chose to offer these and other lectures to the academically unfashionable. When I pulled into the faculty parking lot, a pretty young woman—one of the few middle-class Parisians among my students—leaned out of a second-story window, smiled, waved to me, then let drop a blob of spit intended for the same rocket emblem on the car's hood that had already infuriated the young man on the avenue du Maine. After a lecture on the textual glories of Melville's *Moby Dick*, I suggested she explain to me why she had felt compelled to spit at my car. I would be driving the car in Paris for the next six months and I wanted to know precisely why it seemed so strong an object of contention. Nothing personal, she assured me. Her spitting on my car was an *action politique*, an act of vengeance for all the babies Oldsmobile had ostensibly napalmed in Vietnam. Then she frowned. Politics aside, she added, she felt it her duty to tell me that my car was too big, too powerful, too *Américaine* for the streets of Paris.

I had shipped my car to France because I walk on braces and crutches, the result of a childhood attack of polio that left me crippled. I need a car equipped with hand controls. While hand controls were not entirely unknown in France in 1981, they were prohibi-

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tively expensive. To have installed them on a Peugot 504, the smallest French-built car I could sit in comfortably, would have cost more than shipping my Olds from New York to Le Havre.

Economy was not the sole reason I would drive *la belle Américaine* through Paris for the next six months. By 1981, anyone who chose to drive such a car in Europe knew that he would be expected to pay a certain psychological price for the privilege. Big American cars were as unfashionable as a group of drunken furriers at an animal rights convention hosted by Cleveland Amory. And yet, for an American who came of driving age during the 1950s and 1960s, driving precisely such a car was his right-of-birth prerogative. My own personal passion for such cars, once caught, was to remain fervent. I continue to view the overpowered big gas-guzzler as among the gifts America had bestowed upon the world, along with Jefferson's belief in religious freedom, Whitman's poetry, baseball, William Faulkner's novels, and certain of John Ford's westerns.

The Arab oil boycott of 1973 changed both the nation's driving habits and the nation's history. But for men like me, men who began driving around 1950, a big powerful car was a right of excess—but a right available to all. Of course, even in the fifties I knew men who scorned the chrome portholes of the 1954 Buick Super—my first car, given me by my Uncle Morris in 1961. Even before the Arab oil embargo, I knew men who insisted that smaller was better and who mocked the tail fins that made the late fifties and sixties Cadillac a steel-and-chrome leopard hungering to possess the open road. But such men could be dismissed as cranks or curmudgeons, themselves part of a solid American tradition. For me, nothing in the world was more functionally spacious than the trunk of that same Caddy. Americans talk a great deal about space. I knew that a man going forth into the world could store all of life's necessities in that trunk and a good deal of its luxuries too. Space was ease, power—and space was as clear a definition of freedom as a man might want. (I don't need stories about Daniel Boone to remind me of that today: try placing a folding wheelchair, as I have been doing for the past six years, into what passes for a trunk in one of those squeezed, cut-down, underpowered, dehydrated glue-and-plastic machines we Americans call cars today.)

Like all great passions, mine for the big American car has mythicized itself. I still feel as passionately as ever about those oversized Oldses and Buicks and Caddies and Mercurys. I continue to tell myself that a man who is 6'1" and whose legs are encased in leather and steel has a God-given American right to spread out in the front seat of his car. But I also recognize that my love song to *la belle Américaine* will continue to be sung not for any pragmatic virtues the car possesses but because the beleaguered gas-guzzler still embodies the democratization of possibility that an American man of my generation associates with the open road. A man may not be what he drives, but he can be defined, in part at least, by the machine he chooses to get to where he is going. The truth is that my relationship to the American landscape, a landscape I continue to hunger after, was created by the big American car. It really is a big country. What those oversized and overloaded machines promised was that a man could drive into the heart of his fantasies about America.

A curious love affair with a wrinkled and battered *grande dame*. Then again, those huge Oldsmobiles and Cadillacs and Buicks were never true "luxury" cars—not, at least, in the same high-status sense that a Mercedes or a Rolls or a Jaguar can be called a "luxury" car. Stick a pink 1960s Caddy convertible on Route 66 in Oklahoma or New Mexico today, and it will still absorb the landscape, taking into itself those boarded-up gas stations and shadowy reminders of the cars that drove that road in earlier times. The big cars that almost overnight were transformed in 1973 into a collective Great Satan for environmentalists assumed power over the American landscape. No car can do that today. For the big car was itself a part of the landscape. No one ever had to think of a tail-finned Caddy as an "investment," which is how I hear people speak about their prospective purchase of a Mercedes. What better gauge of our own diminution as a people? A big Caddy was not an investment—it was simply a machine meant to take you where you did not even know you wanted to go.

Throughout that spring and summer of 1981, my big Oldsmobile remained a visible affront to the Parisians. Before I shipped it back to New York in August, the rocket emblem on the hood had been stolen (I find myself hoping that it was copped not by my

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student La Passionara or the angry young man crossing the avenue du Maine but by one of those daring young Parisian motorcyclists who would be more at home among the myths and wreckage of Route 66 today than most American men I know), my rear lights had been bashed in, my hub caps removed one by one. *C'est la guerre.*

I like to think that what irritated the Parisians was not my big American car by itself. Paris was filled to bursting with Rolls Royces and Bentleys and stretched Mercedes limos that spring and summer. I like to think that what the French found irritating was the assumption of freedom the big American car had allowed generations of American men to make. For such cars made driving a remarkably personal experience. Those tedious academic analyses of the big car as sex symbol or power symbol that were so popular during the 1960s were always off the mark. Most academics lack all feeling for machines. Luddites of the imagination, they could not understand that our cars spoke not of sex or power but of liberation. Today's environmentalists who so self-righteously trumpet the demise of *la belle Américaine* simply do not understand the spontaneous freedom the big American car offered.

I know, of course, that my love affair is doomed. A few big car models are still being built today, but the portholed Buick and the tail-finned Cadillac have gone the way of Henry Luce's American Century. In retrospect, an inevitable demise—and perhaps one even a lover should be grateful for. Still, I cannot help but feel that our early passions are our most fulfilling. I cannot help but recall how those big cars gave me the privilege of knowing this country, of touching its geography. I remember the quiet romance of driving a big powerful Oldsmobile north on Route 17 in North Carolina at 5:30 in the morning. I remember how the narrow January light had just begun to break the black of the sky. I remember how it was as if my car had made me part of what I was driving through. It all seemed so clear, so natural—and, dare I mention it, so American.

I remember driving a big ugly gold 1971 Buick across the Texas Panhandle, the car's power and the horizon's depth making me feel I could drive forever into nowhere. I remember driving with my ten-year-old son in that same big ugly Buick through the hauntingly lovely Manzano Mountains in New Mexico. We drove through small Chicano towns with tin-roofed churches, towns with names like Estancia and Tejique and Chillili.

We drove over a rut-pocked, half-paved side road until we found ourselves on a ridge overlooking the town pasture. We were lost. But we weren't really looking to be found. The pasture was, among other things, a Chicano automobile graveyard. Huge rusted overturned hulks and the small pickup trucks they dwarfed stood bleached and blistered beneath the midday sun. A few horses and sheep nibbled at the sparse grass between the dead cars. "It's like Stonehenge," my son said, recalling another drive we had made years ago. And it was—a Stonehenge where machines, like huge balanced rocks, fixed time with the death of function and froze memory itself to a landscape still hungrily awaiting the grace and power and beauty of *la belle Américaine.*

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The Shy Little Scholar of Holder Court

Edmund Wilson at Princeton

LEWIS M. DABNEY

For readers of twentieth-century American literature, the Princeton of 1912–16 has derived its significance from Scott Fitzgerald's romantic sensibility. "There at the head of the white platoon marched Allenby," Fitzgerald writes of the captain of the team in *This Side of Paradise*, translating a chivalric vision into the terms of college spirit. He memorializes a scene of football heroes, torchlight parades, and step singing in the spring evenings, with an underlying social tension derived from the struggle to be a big man on campus. In the same vein, his friend John Peale Bishop called the campus with its green lawns and new gothic buildings, its undergraduate elegance and gaiety, "one of the most desired and desirable places in America in which to loiter through four years of one's youth."

Fitzgerald's vision of Princeton accords with his well-known memory of Edmund Wilson as "the shy little scholar of Holder Court," a marginal figure without the assurance that Wilson showed when established in New York City the following year. It is a misleading image, tainted by Fitzgerald's deference to a social success achieved with studied nonchalance. At Princeton Wilson already felt compelled to take his ideals outside the cloister, playing a part upon the public stage. If in some sense he was a shy scholar, working away at Plato and Dante with his dictionaries late at night, his exuberant commitment to literature and ideas, his physical vigor, and his tenacity enabled him to assume authority among his artistic and literary friends, Fitzgerald included. These apprentice years would help him to become a guide to readers and writers of the twenties, to fuse politics with literature in the thirties and afterwards. As an undergraduate he was beginning to participate in the shared enterprise Wilson himself once described as an effort "to make something of America, to make an American culture."

Unlike Fitzgerald's hero Gatsby, Wilson was not a child of some "Platonic conception of himself." He was a bookish youth with a discipline that had been inculcated by the father against whom he was rebelling. In boarding school, he had acquired a good English style, classical aesthetic ideals, and an aspiration to be a man of letters. He had the confidence of being from an old Princeton family. His father and half a dozen uncles had gone to the college in the 1880s and 1890s. Now attorney general of New Jersey, Edmund Wilson, Sr., had been a leader of student opinion as an undergraduate. For his part in a rebellion against the faculty he was "rusticated," sent north to the small town of Kingston for the balance of the year. As a freshman the younger Wilson lived in a dormitory financed by his father's class, next door to Sterling Carter, the son of one of his father's classmates, and the two young men helped each other out as their fathers had, Wilson acting out the speeches in Shakespeare for Carter, who did math with him. His best friend at The Hill School, Stanley Dell, had come on to Princeton, as had his cousin Sandy, now a sophomore. A number of these students

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would pursue literature, philosophy, or the fine arts professionally, while others would go on to careers in law, medicine, or public life. As undergraduates some of them held to the standard of "gentleman's C" and avoided the onus attached to non-conformist behavior. There were others, however, as serious as Wilson was, and they had the leisure to study and write in the Oxonian campus bordered by the eighteenth-century façades of Nassau Street. Woodrow Wilson, president of Princeton from 1902 to 1910, had found and employed such distinguished men as Christian Gauss, who established the modern languages department, and the Kantian philosopher Norman Kemp Smith; he introduced the preceptorial system of instruction, which emphasized small discussion groups. In these years before the United States entered World War I, the first signs of the renascence of the twenties were appearing around the country, and the intellectual life of the old universities was invigorated.

This intellectual Princeton overlapped with that of the majority. As a freshman Edmund took a modest part in the rush, at that time a struggle with the sophomores for control of the gym doors, and attended the Yale and Harvard games. To Alfred Bellinger, his successor as editor of the literary magazine at Hill, he writes of how "a jovial company of us" went down to Trenton to see *Pinafore* performed by what turned out to be a terrible stock company. The students harassed the performers, stomping their feet when Sir Joseph Porter walked across the stage and throwing peppermints at the leading lady, until six "ponderous" cops marched in "like the Policemen's Chorus in the *Pirates of Penzance*." He organized and led a walking trip of Hill alumni back to Pottstown over a weekend, a distance of about seventy-five miles. Detesting sports that were compulsory, he enjoyed "moonlight skating through the level country solitudes of Stony Brook" in the winter, and canoe trips late in the spring. In vacations, not eager to return to a strained home situation in Red Bank, he was happy to be invited to visit people who lived in and around New York, in the town of Washington, Connecticut, where Alfred and Sterling Carter both came from, and in New Hampshire. In old age Wilson would half-nostalgically recall these families who "were well-to-do or, if not, 'belonged' through their family connections, and who occupied positions of responsibility." Their conversation afforded perspective on the collegiate scene.

There was little academic pressure in the first college years, as Wilson's letters to Bellinger show. "Up betimes and to McCosh Hall where I am examined in College Algebra, which, God help me, I fear I did do very ill," the freshman writes in the style of Pepys's *Diary*. "Thence to dinner, and after to Sir Stanley's chamber. . . . We do copy Sir Stanley's Hygiene notes and thank Heaven that there be one conscientious enough to attend all the lectures." Science courses were not much more than "playing chemistry" in the lab. Incompetent in practical matters, he attached the apparatus he had created to the water faucet instead of the Bunsen burner. After his regimen at Hill, the English courses seemed absurdly superficial. "Dr. Johnson was a very great man who had a very great influence on his age," he later wrote in parody. "Tomorrow, gentlemen, we shall take up Wordsworth, Byron, and Burns. For the preceptorial, read Congreve's *The Way of the World*." Modern literature was not part of the curriculum. In 1912, Wilson would recall, "Ernest Dowson and Oscar Wilde were the latest sensational writers who had got in past the stained-glass windows" of the library. Edmund, however, immersed himself in current British writers, and in the spring of his freshman year he joined the board of the *Nassau Literary Magazine*, where many of his activities and interests of the next years are recorded.

As an undergraduate reviewer he commented on the social prophecies of Shaw and Wells, Chesterton's criticism, and the caricatures of Max Beerbohm, as well as novelists from Meredith to Arnold Bennett and Compton Mackenzie. He praised the poetry of Masefield, then changed his mind. His letters to Bellinger chart his artistic discoveries and discriminations, documenting the educated taste of the time. They had decided to exchange books that might challenge the other's taste. Twitting his friend for conservative and Anglophile prejudices—though he himself still called Browning "the greatest poet of all time"—Wilson defended his preferences among the Edwardians. He commented on French writers he was reading in class; on Ibsen, whom Dell and he had discovered; on Dostoyevsky. He adopted an authoritative

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manner and formality of tone, in contrast to the boyish exuberance and wit with which he told Bellinger of college life.

Wilson retained a rather English tone as his tastes broadened, and he soon acquired an English bicycle, then a rarity on campus. In his Greek studies as an upperclassman he was using the gilt-edged editions published at Oxford by the Clarendon Press. From a dictionary that had been his father's (where he found a pressed rose that he celebrated in a quaint poem in the *Lit)* he graduated to the huge Liddell and Scott, the same lexicon that had been used by Browning, Arnold, Swinburne, Pater, Wilde, and Thomas Hardy. Late at night, at a rolltop desk with a gooseneck lamp, he worked away at the elegant nuances of Homer, Plato, and Aristophanes against the backdrop of the drunken singing of collegians on the way back to their dorms from the Nassau Inn. Although he avoided further English courses, he was saturated in this English culture. Socrates was one of his heroes. Swift was another. Writing to Alfred as a junior and senior, Edmund finds Macaulay admirable for "his scrupulous thoroughness, his sound literary conscience, and his knowledge and acceptance of his own limitations. . . . He had one of those able, dogmatic, and stubborn minds of which Johnson was a great typical example in the eighteenth century and Chesterton a perhaps somewhat enfeebled one in our own." Boswell had a novelist's skill at biography, and "his Scotch honesty compelled him to tell the truth, even when his part was a ludicrous or mean one." All these qualities would in time emerge in Wilson's writing.

Despite his later patriotic Americanisms, Wilson never outgrew his enthusiasm for literary England. The pinnacle of this enthusiasm, which would return in his relationships with English men of letters after World War II, was a summer tour with friends in 1914, following his sophomore year. "England!" he thought in "awed ecstacy" as their ship entered the Mersey. They bicycled from Edinburgh through the Lake District—he read Wordsworth's *Prelude* in the evenings—and on through the cathedral towns as far as Wales, before they "cheated" by taking the train for a few hours. On a solitary pilgrimage to Meredith's house in Surrey, "where half a dozen great novels were written," he began a journal he would keep off and on for the rest of his life. He also left the group and went to London, where he enjoyed the spectacle of Beerbohm Tree and Mrs. Patrick Campbell ignoring Shaw's direction in *Pygmalion.* He saw Ibsen's *Ghosts* ("a horrible thing and much more so for being wonderfully acted"), went to art exhibitions, Westminster Abbey, and the music halls, and bought "a huge tome on Henry James." His wardrobe was inadequate, and his old suitcase came apart on a station platform, but in a shirt borrowed from one friend and a tie from another, he charged around London by bus and taxi, reveling in all his associations with the street names. He bought new clothes, to Bellinger reporting, "I persuaded an aged duke to sell me modest articles of attire." With American irreverence Wilson turned "the mysteries" of making lemon squash in the hotel dining room into a magic trick. "I showed the ladies and gentlemen that I had nothing but a bottle of soda, a bowl of sugar, and a very little lemon juice at the bottom of a large glass." When he put the sugar, which he had doctored, into the glass, the result was "a loud explosion, the lemonade ascended like a waterspout, and the table was flooded." It was as much fun as Chemistry 103, he proclaimed.

The group was unable to go on to Paris, for on the bank holiday of August 4, England declared war on Germany. Although Edmund expected that the war might be over in weeks, he was dismayed by the popular enthusiasm: "people riding on the top of taxis, cheering in the crowded streets; a mob around Buckingham Palace calling for the King and Queen—'Mary! we're wyting!'—making them come back to the balcony over and over again . . . I wondered whether they thought that the war was all going to be a tremendous bank holiday." He was glad to get return passage to the States; he would oppose American entry into the war just as his father did. Back at Princeton he enviously savored the literary past of Oxford and Cambridge. "You walk along a street, cross a little stream, stand in the quad of a college, or come suddenly upon some unexpected meadow traversed by shady paths, and, following close on the joy of discovery, as soon as you have learned its name, you begin to remember the great ones of fiction and history who have stood exactly where you have stood," he wrote as the new editor of the *Lit*, in an article protesting the absence of "authentic great men" and a literary heritage in his own university. The only

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remedy, he concluded, was "to bring about the celebrated events and become the great men ourselves, with a view to our successors. . . . We must, indeed, set ourselves to the task of living up to our posterity."

Thus the young Edmund Wilson prepared for his part in the history that included Britain's loss of cultural dominance and the flowering of American writing already beginning during World War I. To a well-educated undergraduate of the time, American literature seemed provincial. Bored by the New England poets of the schoolroom, by Dr. Holmes's "wonderful one-hoss shay" and Whittier's *Snow-Bound*, Edmund would not see the range of the American masters until the twenties, when Melville's reemergence would contribute to a new canon. At school, however, he had given his sixth form oration on O. Henry rather than a classical subject and had enjoyed the rollicking Mencken of *The Smart Set*—the lists of pet peeves, the catalogues of daily experiences. Reading Mencken in college, he was led to *Huckleberry Finn* and to James—Mencken pronounced *What Maisie Knew* "a passionless masterpiece." In a letter to Bellinger—that also includes a long discussion of DeQuincy's style—he announces the discovery of two "American masterpieces," James's *The Turn of the Screw* and Wharton's *Ethan Frome*. James is the subject of his first literary essay, which appeared in 1914 when the novelist was still alive and criticism of his art only beginning. Wilson liked James's tight dramatic staging, and a classmate helped him understand the mannered conversation of the characters, explaining that this was an aesthetic convention like any other. Although Meredith's novels seemed more alive and Mark Twain clearly knew America better, Wilson admired James's opposition of imagination and urbanity to moral responsibility, James's "fine Puritanism." "*Paradise Lost* is not a more real struggle between the spirits of good and evil than *The Turn of the Screw*," he declared.

He went on reading Wharton, James, and Edwin Arlington Robinson—he met Robinson, who visited the college—as well as Mencken and James Huneker, writers outside this Anglo-American tradition. Huneker's *Egoists*, published in 1909, introduced a generation to European literature. Mencken's literary and social criticism strengthened Edmund's interest in "working our own field." At Princeton, a maverick English professor defended Whitman to his classes: " 'Born on Long Island, died in Camden—found life beautiful!' Dr. Spaeth used to roar in defiance of people who, living close to Camden, assumed that it was too far away from the localities mentioned in 'The Scholar Gypsy' to inspire the right kind of poetry." One day Wilson's friends and he bought a copy of a privately printed book by a doctor in nearby Rutherford, New Jersey, unconventional poetry that "had a kind of spare dignity," though they did not know quite what to make of it. The poet was William Carlos Williams. Wilson noted O'Neill's early one-act plays in the *Lit*, and in 1915 was excited by Van Wyck Brooks's *America's Coming-of-Age*. Old enough to be educated in the English tradition before the war, he would bring its values and skills to his role as interpreter of the emerging American culture. Ironically, the last major man of letters in the English line was to be an American literary nationalist.

In a photograph as an upperclassman Edmund Wilson appears austere and purposeful, looking as if he had been studying more than was socially desirable at Princeton. He believed that he could subject himself to the control of his mind, could make himself do what he thought he should be doing. In this way of thinking Wilson was strongly influenced by a secularized Puritan tradition. When he found himself playing with an eraser instead of applying himself to the page of Homer before him, he grandiloquently despaired—"Calvin, I understand you; Jonathan Edwards, you are justified." But he also made life fun for his literary friends, for he loved jokes, parodies, and literary hoaxes. Entering into the majority Princeton, he wrote the book for the 1915 Triangle Show, called "The Evil Eye." "Red-haired, eager, tireless, he bubbled with ideas and threw them out by the handful," Christian Gauss recalled of his student and future friend. He was "carrying the war into the country of the Philistines," as Gauss put it, defending the standards of the intellectual minority in editorials about the curriculum and the social system.

In temperament and taste Wilson's friends ranged widely. Bill Mackie drank and was a party-goer, yet he and Edmund did advanced

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work together in Latin, a subject in which Wilson considered himself poorly prepared. He had believed Latin boring on account of Caesar and Cicero, until in a reading course he succeeded in discovering Catullus's love poems and the *Eclogues* and *Georgics* of Virgil. In the evenings he read Tibullus with Mackie. "I have never known anyone droller or more sensitive to literature," Wilson recalled in old age. Bill had a racy wit, and was a master of Pepys's *Diary* style: he describes his summer reading in an eighteenth-century script and manner that might fool us were it not for the references to Max Nordau's *Degeneration* and other books of the 1890s. Edmund, however, was uneasy over Bill's reading "without system or aim," over the miscellaneous piles of books strewn on the floor of his room; when he drifted away from literature Wilson was disappointed but not surprised. At the other extreme was John Wyeth, the "pure aesthete" of the class, who seemed all too willing to leave the real world to the Philistines. Wyeth—who became a painter like his famous relatives—played Debussy late into the night. As a senior he proposed to ignore the advent of World War I by renting a cottage in the chateau district of France and amusing himself playing the piano. He was the one who taught Wilson how to read Henry James. Near the end of his life, he recalled how Edmund and he, "by some mystery" elected to a club, discussed literature and art at dinner alone among the socialites and jocks, Wilson not in the least intimidated. "There was something wonderful about him," Wyeth said.

The campus writers Wilson thought most talented were Stanley Dell, his friend from Hill, John Peale Bishop, who succeeded him as editor of the magazine, and Scott Fitzgerald, who entered the group through his friendship with John. Dell was a sophisticate who had lived much abroad. A student of philosophy, he wrote with a clarity and sensitivity that seemed to have all the makings of a novelist. Bishop was a southerner with a self-assurance that his friends considered aristocratic; he was something of a dandy and a libertine. A poet who loved verbal music and sensuous detail, he derived his romanticism from Swinburne and Shelley, but before he left college he was imitating Yeats and Pound. Wilson and Bishop first regarded Fitzgerald with the ambivalence of bookish undergraduates toward a manipulator bent on social success. In Wilson's attitude there was a measure of snobbery toward someone who was both a practicing Catholic and a product of the Middle West—the latter a circumstance from which Fitzgerald rather suffered, though he romanticized it at the end of *The Great Gatsby*.

One day, as readers of the dedicatory poem for *The Crack-Up* know, Scott left at Wilson's door a story of a bohemian artist called "Shadow Laurels," which, for all its romantic cliché, had a lyric power. Correcting the spelling and syntax, Wilson published this story in the *Lit* in the spring of 1915. Another time he came on Fitzgerald waiting for him in his room, a "creature strange to college" intently "pinching out" his pimples in the mirror that reflected his pale skin, yellow hair, and "hard green eyes." Wilson would always admire the assurance that was part of Fitzgerald's narcissistic strain. That summer Scott was doing the lyrics for the Triangle Show while Edmund struggled with the libretto, and the next fall these two, with Bishop and Dell, were in the same preceptorial of Christian Gauss's French course. By the time that Fitzgerald withdrew from college, under cover of illness, to avoid academic suspension, a basis had been laid for his and Wilson's friendship after the war, as they emerged in the complementary roles of artist and critic. Fitzgerald's imaginative gift and his resilience would enable him to profit by Wilson's biting criticisms of his first novels.

As upperclassmen these literati grew critical of the Princeton social system. This was "the Indian Summer of the 'College Customs' era in our campus life," Gauss writes. Freshmen still had to wear black caps and jerseys and stay away from the elegant club buildings on Prospect Street until the elections in the spring of sophomore year; the "sacred privileges" of upperclassmen were regularly defended in the *Princetonian*. Fitzgerald the outsider, who identified the gentlemanly ideal of the college with the pageantry he loved, could also apparently feel that they were hollow. The idol of the young hero of *This Side of Paradise*, Dick Humbird, who apparently can do anything and make it look right, is killed when driving drunk, and Humbird later appears as the devil. When the president of the university objected to his novel, Fitzgerald replied that the whole social

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system was "conceived uniquely for students without talent or imagination."

John Peale Bishop's later portrait of Princeton in *The Smart Set* ends on a similar note. After defending its leisurely aristocratic life, he confesses at the last moment that if he should have a son of notable intelligence and promise, he will lock him up in a library till he is old enough to send to Paris. Neither Scott nor John said such things as students. Stanley Dell, however, attacked the religion of "college spirit" as the sign of American provinciality and mediocrity, in what purported to be a "Letter from a French Graduate" in the *Lit* of 1915. Intellectually independent and socially an insider, a member of one of the "best" clubs, Dell laughed at the figure of "the confident collegian justifying the course of least resistance by an ideal he has himself created"—able to find in the big game, the rush, and the Triangle Show an alternative to learning in college.

The essential issue for the intellectual minority at Princeton during these years was the eating clubs. Woodrow Wilson had unsuccessfully tried to replace these with residential quads, an aborted reform that, setting the pattern of his frustrations as a political leader, would be the subject of Edmund's 1927 essay "Woodrow Wilson at Princeton." In college, the critic recalled, "I read and listened to Wilson's speeches and accepted him as a shining champion in the war against sordid business, a reformer-intellectual in politics." At first Edmund had nothing against the clubs and looked forward to being admitted to one of these halls of good fellowship. As a sophomore he tried not to get too nervous about the elections, and when Dell's club passed him over—ostensibly for lack of "special ability" or "noticeable brains"—he was glad to go into a more modest one. He found that all he did there was eat and read the papers. John Bishop makes the same point, stating that "the trouble with the clubs is that, once in them, they matter so little after having seemed to matter so much."

As a senior, Wilson concluded that the clubs were a barrier to the intellectual Princeton he had come to believe in through his best professors. His objections were not egalitarian. He respected the Yale senior societies like Skull and Bones, where intellectual ability was recognized and the selection came late enough in one's college career to be an incentive to merit. The Princeton system, on the other hand, turned the first two college years into a quest for social approval that caused people to "behave with one accord like a lot of fools, cads, and snobs," he declared in his final editorial in the *Lit*. If saying this did not make Wilson popular in his class, the minority for whom he spoke were getting stronger. In 1917 more than a quarter of the sophomore class, led by Dick Cleveland, the ex-president's son, refused to join a club in an effort to bring the system down.

He looked on other aspects of campus life with a humorous tolerance he may have acquired from Bishop, who was not so weary of "college spirit" as was Dell. Eventually, however, he attacked those conservatives who were committed to defending any custom handed down to them, except perhaps the practice of throwing snowballs through the windows into lecture rooms "to get the professor's goat." The romanticization by many of the good old days provoked his best undergraduate prose:

> Those were the days of the happiest carelessness, the loosest organization and the most perfunctory regard for the classroom. They possess for us a romance which it seems cruel to suggest as their only redeeming feature. A procession was held at midnight to celebrate Halley's Comet; a doctor's excuse could be had for a quarter; when one did not like a lecturer one prevented him from talking; when one was bored by a preacher one cut him short by coughing. We have mentioned elsewhere that triumphant cry engraved forever on the pavement of Dickinson Street; "WHO WON THE RUSH '04." Fancy the time when people cared for such things! But how naive, how merry, they must have been! Those were the days of boyishness, fresh and unaffected: that is, they were days of prevalent drunkenness, cheating in examinations, intellectual cowardice and repression, indiscriminate mockery, general ignorance and the branding as a "sad bird" of anyone who tried to rise above it.

This is what Wilson meant when in old age he said, "I enjoyed the pleasant Princeton life except when my reforming zeal would come to the surface." As editor he struck off half a dozen pieces on these lines, with Shaw and Wells as immediate models. Witty and fervent, they have the lucidity and conversational ease of his mature criticism.

Wilson also wrote literary essays and short stories, set to verse his thoughts about the

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artist and education, and recorded undergraduate life and talk in his journal. In addition to this one on James, he wrote essays on Stendhal and Huysmans. As a sophomore he experienced the hereditary Anglo-Saxon trepidation in the presence of a French immorality and decadence he found more attractive than he cared to say. He condescended to Stendhal's worldly irony in a piece that, in old age, Wilson called "hypocritical guff," stating that he had much admired Stendhal. An unpublished manuscript on Huysmans locates this apostle of bohemian freedom in "a suffocating *cul de sac.*" He laments Huysmans's inability to create characters outside himself, describing his story as "the second-rate tragedy of a man perverted by too much culture and bored to death by civilization." These are much the reservations Wilson would have about the perverse, solipsistic aspect of modernism in *Axel's Castle,* where Proust is said to have "put into practice the regime which Huysmans invented for his hero."

During this time, Wilson's poems were already an outlet for the private reflection he would try to keep out of his criticism. They contain his thoughts about the heroism of writers and artists—"Swift: The Dark Hour," "Whistler at Battersea"—and the drama of education. Princeton by night, apparently "The Sleeping College," is in fact a stage "where learning lives and human souls find birth." To Bellinger he confessed the fear that "I haven't much distinction in the use of words—not for poetic purposes anyhow." The journal he began in England would become a source of his writing in other forms. The college years contain interesting details. The Protestant freethinker took note when Scott Fitzgerald remarked, "I can go up to New York on a terrible party and then come back and go into the church and *pray*—and mean every word of it, too!" An effete, insipid undergraduate life is also visible in this potpourri of descriptive passages, lists of expressions, book titles, remarks the young man thought pointed or witty enough to set down. On the other hand, the act of recording experience on the page was important to Wilson, whose memory for details of personality and scene would be the source of much of his lasting work.

Some of his fiction reflects his uneasy relationships with his parents. In one story, an ostensible exposé of the dullness of New Jersey life, a boy's father dies, liberating the son to contemplate an ambition very different from his father's and to explore the world, at least as far as the corner drugstore. In the Oedipal triangle of "Below Stairs," published in the June Wilson graduated, a jockey is hired by his boss to run away with the man's wife and not return. When the two fall in love and return to New York, catastrophe follows: the hero ineffectually tries to shoot his employer and is immediately captured, while the wife, reading of her lover's fate in the newspaper, repudiates this evil world for a convent. "Below Stairs" suggests how little he knew of girls his own age, the debutantes whom his friends were taking to dances.

He was aware of a certain awkwardness in these stories. To Bellinger he reports that "Teek Whipple came in and burst into roars of laughter at the sentence I had written, which was 'My God, girl!' said the doctor. 'We don't wear wigs in America,' and really one can hardly blame him, because it is certainly a little startling, out of its context." That he had to work at his fiction with a strain that his critical writing lacked would not modify Wilson's ambitions in this genre.

When Wilson in the early twenties looked back on Princeton in an article on the Ivy League schools, he evoked not the social atmosphere that his friends wrote about, but a humanistic ideal. If the much-talked-of social revolution ever came, he hoped that a few places would survive where one could read Plato in Greek "and with the appreciation of a peer." Twenty years later he wrote that "in my youth you read Shakespeare, Shelley, George Meredith, Dostoevsky, Ibsen, and you wanted, however imperfectly and on however infinitesimal a scale, to learn their trade and have the freedom of their company." This is not an arbitrary list—Shakespeare and Shelley had also made their mark on him. The sense of meeting the great writers on their own level distinguishes this literary generation from its successors produced by American universities. Appreciation and emulation were for them as closely connected as were criticism and imaginative writing. Eliot, Stevens, and Pound were followed by Dos Passos and Cummings at Harvard, Wilson, Fitzgerald, and their friends at Princeton. After Fitzgerald's death, Dos Passos remarked that he had "raise[d] the level of American fiction to follow in some such way as Marlowe's blank

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verse line raised the whole level of Elizabethan verse." Their undergraduate literary educations were important to these writers, and their teachers were models and guides to life. This was conspicuously true of Wilson, given his short-circuited connections with his father. At school he had turned to the fierce but benign discipline of his Greek teacher, Mr. Rolfe; and in college he found heroes in Christian Gauss and Norman Kemp Smith, who would turn out to be lifetime friends.

Gauss was then thirty-five and an outsider in genial Princeton. In his old raincoat, passing by on the walk with "pale cheeks and shuttered gaze," sometimes accompanied by a shabby mongrel dog named Baudelaire, he had an air of the nineties for the campus writers—he was known to have been a journalist in Paris, and shared drinks with Oscar Wilde. He made a formidable impression in the lecture course on Dante, having the same command of the classroom as of the subject. He expounded Dante's code of loyalty to the truth "no matter where it led or whom it hurt," and the idea of "*il ben del intelletto*," that "good of the intellect" which required vigilant cultivation. He showed that the poet's art "was polished and carefully planned" and "knew how to make its points and the meaning of the points it was making." For Gauss, Dante conveyed the whole spectrum of human passions "in an orderly vision that implied also a reasoned morality," and he made his students feel that no Englishman could have accomplished this, even Shakespeare. His *bete noire* was Robert Browning, whom he portrayed as a tone-deaf beefeater, concocting facile moral dramas in Italy while Dante's ghost looked on in wry disdain. In private, Gauss would admit to having acquired "a lot of bad doctrine" from Browning in youth.

This was the future critic's introduction to the continental aesthetic, which gave the writers of the twenties perspective on English literature and a way to see their native materials. Dante had much the same value for Eliot and Pound, different as they were from each other as well as from Wilson. Flaubert was the writer who took this standard into modern fiction, achieving a seamless, impersonal expression of his idea of the world. When Gauss lectured on Flaubert in his French course, Wilson recalls, "He made us all want to write something in which every word, every cadence, every detail, should perform a definite function in producing an intense effect." Edmund was soon emulating the search for *le mot juste* in his journal. After the war he would exhort Fitzgerald to practice Flaubert's objectivity and irony, advice that helped to shape the novelist's development between *This Side of Paradise* and *The Great Gatsby*—something that Wilson later politely attributed to Gauss's influence.

Gauss's French course helped lay the basis for Edmund Wilson's criticism. Beginning with Voltaire and Rousseau, the professor expounded the romantics, the philosophy of naturalism, the symbolism of the fin de siècle, much as Wilson does in the background chapter of *Axel's Castle*. He taught Michelet as well as Renan, Taine, and Anatole France, all of whom would at one time or another be Wilson's models. He saw the later historian-critics as victims of a "palsying pessimism," somewhat as Wilson does in the first section of *To The Finland Station*. Gauss introduced the young man to Sainte-Beuve, whom Edmund wanted to emulate, until impatience with the gossipy, journalistic aspect of the *Causeries de lundi* sent him to Arnold, to whom Sainte-Beuve owed much. In Voltaire he found the essence of the wit and irony he enjoyed in Flaubert and other French writers, and Voltaire also exemplified the ideals of the Enlightenment, making him want to be "a soldier in the Liberation War of humanity." It can be argued that Johnson's *Lives of the Poets* and Boswell's *Life* influenced the critic more than anything in Voltaire, just as Arnold's effect on him matched that of Sainte-Beuve and Taine. In youth, however, he was rebelling against the British tradition, which was less consciously aesthetic and more politically conservative than the French. France had the attraction of being a foreign culture and a living one, unlike ancient Greece, though he worked at the writers with dictionary in hand. Later in life he would grow into his inheritance from the English.

Gauss's teaching methods also made Wilson aspire to an encyclopedic knowledge and to the historical point of view—one that remained more congenial to him than what he would see as the obscurantism and dogma of many theorists. Gauss talked about personalities as well as texts. He believed that moral issues were real, which made him an effective interpreter of French aestheticism to a mor-

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ally earnest young man. The artist's code was not, he said, that of the citizen or the churchgoer. When Edmund defined as "humane" an impulse to avoid telling a friend who wanted to contribute to the *Lit* that his manuscript was terrible, Gauss suggested the right word was "weak." In preceptorials he usually confined himself to Socratic questioning. When he asked where beauty, justice, goodness, and other values come from, and Wilson replied, "Out of the imaginations of men," however, Gauss commented, "That is correct." It was a memorable moment for the student, who fifteen years later used this phrase in criticizing Eliot's assertion that civilization depended on the Christian church. Gauss shared the Enlightenment philosophy "that the world was real and that we ourselves may find some sense in it and make ourselves happy in it," that Wilson took as his own. After World War I, Wilson would go down from New York to Princeton to visit Christian Gauss and they would exchange letters, but in his college years theirs was not a personal relationship. He knew Gauss only in class and in casual campus conversation. Revering him from afar, he brought a driving intensity to the ideas and ideals that they shared, projecting onto the professor a Promethean ambition.

Wilson did not have the same stake in his more informal relationship with the philosopher Norman Kemp Smith. Kemp Smith sometimes invited students to Sunday dinner followed by a country walk. They were not ordinary social occasions, for the Scotsman did not speak except when he had something to say. The sight of his own innocent child might cause him to speculate about the possibility of innate ideas. Edmund enjoyed his wit. "Kemp Smith said that a professor of his acquaintance was driven out of the parish in disgrace by the congregation of the little Scotch country church in which he had been preaching, because he said in one of his sermons that the weather was almost certainly not managed by Providence but probably the result of natural conditions." This is a note in Wilson's journal. Although Kemp Smith apparently believed in God, he remarked that if you were not persuaded of immortality, "you ought not to allow yourself to be convinced by the death of a favorite daughter." It was what Edmund had told himself several years earlier, when an aged preacher at Hill said that the boys would come to share his point of view when they were old enough.

A serious thinker in the secularized Calvinist tradition of which Wilson, too, was a product, Kemp Smith was intellectually the most impressive figure at Princeton at the time. About the same age as Gauss, he was already a recognized authority on Descartes, and in 1915–16 he was working on what remains the standard translation of Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*. He would later expound the skepticism of Hume. His lectures were a systematic exploration of everything from the nature of man's knowledge of the external world to aesthetics. He knew enough literature to base an argument on Wordsworth and spoke of the personalities of Boswell and Hume as well as their ideas. He was also interested in "science, ideas, and news—in everything that men were doing. Philosophy had always meant for him everything that men had thought." Such a man left his mark. He would not be a professional model, for Wilson was never a theorist or system-builder. He could admire Kemp Smith's mind while observing its paradoxical relationship to the everyday world, as when, in class, the professor had just disproved the existence of sound when his lecture was interrupted by a brass band outside the windows. Kemp Smith's metaphysics contained a skepticism that strengthened Wilson's, as his character strengthened Wilson's view that one made life significant out of personal effort.

Wilson would keep in touch with these teachers. In Gauss he had found a second, intellectual father and a sounding board. In the dedication to *Axel's Castle*, he would acknowledge a debt to Gauss's lectures and endorse his view of criticism as "the history of man's ideas and imaginings in the setting of the conditions which have shaped them." Wilson conceived of artists as antennae of the race—much like Pound—negotiating new experiences and helping humanity to move ahead. Gauss would have subscribed to the idea. With Kemp Smith his relationship was similarly durable. They corresponded, and though the philosopher went to Edinburgh to assume the chair of logic and metaphysics, Wilson managed to visit from time to time, even as late as 1945. Ten years later, Kemp Smith wrote to his former student contrasting Santayana's "muddled theorizing" to the "fascinating autobiographies" that gave a key to "his complex make-up"—observations quite in Wilson's vein. In the lecture called "The

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Historical Interpretation of Literature," given at Princeton in 1940, Wilson cites Kemp Smith in support of the view that the critic's authority is ultimately personal, that his judgments rest on the emotional satisfaction that derives from the imposition of form on the pain and disorder of reality. Summing up his own aesthetic, he writes, "This relief that brings the sense of power, and, with the sense of power, joy, is the positive emotion which tells us that we have encountered a first-rate piece of literature."

The idealistic student cherished his vision of what Princeton might be, although his friends generally considered it at odds with the realities. He saw himself not so much as a marginalized member of a minority as one of the majority for whom he spoke, even as he attempted to direct their interests and tastes, often against their own inclinations. To occupy this position within the institutional structure of the college was good practice for a lifetime effort to extend artistic and intellectual standards in the United States. Wilson believed that the educated man in the street could be enlightened about Proust and Joyce, about Marx and the revolutionary tradition, about the Dead Sea Scrolls and the literature of the Civil War, never deferring to the limitations of this common reader's vision. He would not assume an adversarial relationship to an anti-intellectual culture, as would most of the intellectual elite of post–World War II America.

His college years had given him a sense of continuity with the great writers of the past, a belief that their work could be carried on and made new in his own time. His was a privileged education, derived from a class that valued literature and art and had some leverage on public affairs. He would be able to make use of it outside the milieu in which he had grown up and was already committed to opening up to others the intellectual experiences that it made available to him. His last review in the *Lit* was an appreciation of the account of a man who had worked his way through college, a piece that anticipates the democratization of American education.

In the army he looked back nostalgically to Princeton in his poems. After World War I, however, it seemed impossible to have "sentimental emotions" about any institution, and Princeton faded for him during the twenties. The last class reunion he attended was a drunken affair in 1925, which he described in a *New Republic* piece about the disillusioning effects of the war on his generation. In the thirties, when Wilson was attacking capitalism from the left, all that remained of his youthful ideal was satire:

> I too have faked the glamor of gray towers,
> I too have sung the ease of sultry hours,
> Clean woods, wide playing-fields, smooth ponds,
> Where clean boys train to sell their country's bonds.

In a sense, his relationship with Gauss had replaced the institutional tie, and Gauss's death in 1950 severed Wilson's loyalties, though he lived pleasantly off Nassau Street when giving the Gauss lectures two years later. In the modern, technological Princeton his impression was that the humanities were not faring very well. Perhaps this perception was accentuated because the university never gave him any money, something Wilson always needed. The *Princeton University Library Chronicle* paid him fifty dollars for "Thoughts on Being Bibliographed," an essay as valuable for its own time as Emerson's "American Scholar." When he resorted to selling his papers to pay overdue income tax, it was Yale's Beinecke Library that bought them.

He remained loyal to the literary friends with whom he set forth into the world, even when they disappointed him. John Biggs, a friend of Fitzgerald's who gave up realistic fiction to become a lawyer, then a distinguished federal judge, gave up too much in Wilson's eyes. When Dell failed to pursue literature, when Bishop's writing, still largely imitative, failed to flower, he attributed it to problems in their private lives—Bishop's marriage, Dell's long analysis with Jung. He preached art to them for its own sake and as a way of dealing with their problems. "Now is your time to creep up on Hemingway," he would write to Fitzgerald in 1933, when Scott's life was disintegrating and he was beginning to feel hopelessly inferior to the novelist whom he had helped on his way. Wilson's ambitions for others and proclivities as a cheerleader colored his conception of the role of a critic. That his talent was for interpretive, expository writing made it easier for

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his creative energies to sustain themselves through all the confusions of his life, while the energies of his novelist and poet friends faded. In old age Wilson once talked of an unwritten work, perhaps in novel form—he thought he might not live to do it—that would consist of a round of visits among the "blasted" comrades of his youth. It is the language of the nineties, the era that first set the image of the artist for this college generation. As a senior at Princeton, Edmund concocted with Scott and John a parody of the fin de siècle, "The Last Remains of Edward Moore Gresham." In making up the poet's sad story, his associates, the influences upon him, and his literary remains, he could never have imagined he would one day address to the dead Fitzgerald a poem beginning, "Scott, your last fragments I arrange tonight."

Wilson's loyalties reflected the cloistered nature of his college world. He neither smoked nor drank, taking one glass of champagne at the yearly banquet of his club. In his class poll, the future inveterate pursuer of women was named most likely bachelor. He sometimes hoped that his powers as a writer would win him the woman of his dreams. In a good-natured letter to Bellinger, in whom he continued to confide, he imagined coming upon this marvelous creature in a moonlit scene in Venice reading "my last novel." Wilson's reverie continues:

> "How do you like that book? It's pretty darn good, is it not?" I blurt out.
>
> "No," she replies, in a lovely voice, "It is the saddest stuff that ever I read."

Even in a daydream the young critic cannot fool himself. The comedy continues. He reveals he is the author—expecting her to express "a better opinion of the novel immediately"—which she doesn't. Looking to the sky for strength, however, she says, "Never mind, I'll marry you just the same."

In editing his journals, he recalled an evening after graduation when Bishop, Fitzgerald, another friend, and he were walking on Nassau Street and two women came by, who it was explained were hookers, a word he had not heard before. "John and Alec went off with the girls, while Scott and I took a walk down the hill to the lake. 'That's one thing,' exclaimed Scott, 'that Fitzgerald's never done!' " If Edmund was not bound by a Catholic conscience—even such a porous one as Scott had claimed—he lacked his friend's confident charm. "My feminine ideal at this time," he wrote when looking back upon his journals, "was not the kind of girl that I saw at the proms, but one of those lively and slender brunettes, capable of serious interests, for whom the heroes of H. G. Wells abandoned their passive wives. When I stayed in hotels, I would dream of amours with complaisant chambermaids, but I would not have had the least idea how to initiate one."

As graduation approached he became impatient with the unreality of college life, an experience familiar to American students. He had no idea how to support himself, as his father had long been insisting he would have to do. Stanley Dell and he had been to summer school at Columbia after their junior year, studying sociology and labor problems, and he had a notion of doing political journalism in Washington. But these ideas were not very concrete. Wilson's lifelong intellectual absorption came at the cost of a certain abstraction and incompetence in practical affairs—he would never learn to drive a car, regularly taking taxis, more than once for hundreds of miles. "One was always conscious of this dichotomy," an old friend recalled, "of looking up to Edmund's phenomenal power of concentration and dedication, to the scope and power and dedication of his mind; at the same time that one looked down at his childlike inability to wrestle with the knubbly facts of life."

"I want to be one of the greatest writers who ever lived, don't you?" Fitzgerald remarked to him not long after they left college. It was an aspiration he could not share, since as he said to himself, Scott had been reading H. G. Wells and Compton Mackenzie when he had been reading Plato and Dante. Yet he had an ambitious conception of the future of their literary group, one that would eventually embrace his literary generation. In 1917 he wrote in his journal, "Princeton was a kind of prelude before the action of the opera had begun, when the leitmotifs which were to dominate the rest of the performance were quietly sounded, as if in play."

Edmund Wilson, Sr., nursing his hypochondria in a sanitarium, did not come to his son's graduation. The son resented this. Yet when

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soon after they talked of his future, it was surprising how his father understood and accepted him. "Don't you think you ought to concentrate on something?" the senior Wilson asked without, however, mentioning money or earning a living. "Father," he replied, "what I want to do is to try to get to know something about all the main departments of human thought." Edmund gratefully remembered that his father "did not even smile at this," nor venture any of the obvious objections that such a statement invited. "That's a possible ambition," he said. "Go ahead if you're really serious."

Gardenias

GILBERT ALLEN

After fifteen years of me
you've planted gardenias
outside the back porch
next to the galvanized downspout

so we can share the unexpected
sweetness on the dew
at breakfast, if the breeze
is just right, as we sit alone.

I have no child, I have nothing but a book
Yeats wrote in 1914.
Forty-eight and not even married!
Just think of all the joy

and foolishness that he discovered
still to be his.

✪ GILBERT ALLEN teaches at Furman University. His poems and essays have appeared in *Art/Life*, *Emrys Journal*, *New Mexico Humanities Review*, and *South Carolina Review*.

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Manuscript from a Delhi Market

(for Skip Johnson)

MICHAEL MCFEE

Tigers lounge in the margins of this green page,
each watching a watchman—the bearded elder
asleep on his drugget, clutching an ivory knife,
the other standing guard, his blood-red bow

taut for centuries now, long enough for worms
to leave behind their pinpoint watermarks
of air, long enough for the merchant to tell you
nobody knew what book this page came from.

But tigers still lounge in the margins, striped
like the bold tents the guards pitched here
in the fierce green mountains when they arrived
with their master the holy man, seen kneeling

in his blue lean-to in the gilded inset panel,
to receive offerings from two veiled women
who walked perhaps for weeks on small bare feet
to this living altar, to beg a small blessing.

And tigers still lounge in the margins, unblessed
but hungry, their teeth bright as the sprays

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of tiny white flowers that have stitched this ink
to this page for so long. Does it really matter

that we can't read the script pouring like apocalypse
across the panel's bruised sky, can't decipher
the one red character toward which the master lifts
his face so calmly, like the tiger to the bow?

There are always tigers lounging in the margins
of any scene, no matter how safe it may seem:
we can believe *that*, dear friend. And all our ties
to the wormy text of earth are more tentative

even than these tents' silk ropes, than the gut
ready to sing its sharp note into the tiger,
than his vanishing whiskers, than the votive hairs
on the hand that painted this lesson lives ago.

✪ MICHAEL McFEE'S second book of poems, *Vanishing Acts*, has recently been published by Gnomon Press. His poems have appeared in *Poetry*, *The New Yorker*, the *Hudson Review*, and other magazines.

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The Myth of Joseph Campbell

MARY R. LEFKOWITZ

On television Joseph Campbell was the embodiment of the ideal academic: gentle, fatherly, informative, reassuring, unworldly, spiritual, and articulate without being incomprehensible. He was knowledgeable about what we didn't have time (or inclination) to discover for ourselves, pleasantly remote, and (unlike most of non-television professors) entertaining. Campbell could tell a good story. And we could switch him off if we were bored or tired. It may also have helped that Campbell had died by the time that *The Power of Myth* was broadcast on PBS, so that we could regard him with respect without needing to engage ourselves with him directly. Many students seem to prefer that kind of class.

But in the fall of 1989 it was suggested, first by Brendan Gill in the *New York Review of Books*, and then by other people who knew him, that Campbell was anti-Semitic and, just as surprisingly for someone who taught at Sarah Lawrence, condescending toward women, and maybe even anti-black into the bargain. These allegations seem to have been based primarily on unrecorded conversations and reminiscences. But in retrospect, further evidence of conduct unbecoming to a Good Professor could be drawn from the transcripts of what he said on television. Wasn't Campbell really endorsing selfish materialism when he recommended to his viewers that they each "follow their own bliss"? Wasn't that as good as saying that the unexamined yuppie life is indeed worth living, so long as they enjoy themselves in the process?

Since I never met Joseph Campbell, I have formed my impression of him from what he wrote, or at least from what he wrote about subjects I know about. I can't claim to be familiar with all the mythologies he describes in his books. In his writings, at least so far as I can see, Campbell doesn't come across as non-liberal or racist or anti-feminist or anti-Semitic. But that doesn't mean that the Written (as opposed to Oral) Campbell should be considered as an objective authority on the subject he professes. Although Campbell himself and many who enjoy his work think of him as a professor of religion, I would argue that he is not a historian or critic of religion, but rather a priest of a new and appealing hero-cult—the religion of self-development.

Campbell starts from the premise that myths "are stories of our search through the ages for truth, for meaning, for significance," and in all cultures, not just the ones we are familiar with. Unlike some of the Victorian writers about mythology, he seems to take the myths and religion of every culture with equal seriousness. If he gives any culture less than equal time, it is the Judeo-Christian, because of what he feels is its insularity; as he says in the written version of *The Power of Myth* (1988): "[The Yahweh cult] was a pushing through of a certain temple-bound god against the nature cult, which was celebrated all over the place. And this imperialistic thrust of a certain in-group culture is continued in the West." At this point Bill Moyers, who played Campbell's Mr. Interlocutor on PBS, could have objected (but didn't) that the Yahweh cult offered some improvements over Baal-cult, such as refraining from human sacrifice. But Campbell seems justified in noting that religious beliefs formed in the first millennium B.C.E. may no longer have application to modern life.

✪ MARY R. LEFKOWITZ, Andrew W. Mellon Professor in the Humanities at Wellesley, is the author of *Women in Greek Myth*.

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Campbell's second premise is that all myths and dreams encode the same messages: the journey, the sacrifice, rebirth/return. In the course of his travels, whatever they are, the hero will come to know the gifts of the goddess through the mysteries of birth and marriage. In the stories that Campbell cites as examples of the basic pattern, the heroes are almost always male, and the females they encounter are essentially passive; they are not so much actors in the story as ideals or goals, entities from whom knowledge or life may be taken, or who will produce and nourish the hero's progeny.

Anyone familiar with classical mythology will first of all remark that this outline makes the journey and its personal goals more important than the hero's external achievements. Campbell's hero is not the Heracles who sacked the city of Oechalia because King Eurytus wouldn't let him marry his daughter Iole. He has instead something in common with Heracles in the philosopher Prodicus's story, which tells how as a young man Heracles at the crossroads was compelled to make a choice between the immediate blandishments of Vice and the postponed rewards of an austere and ethical Virtue. But even the philosopher's Heracles had to undertake his great labors; Campbell's hero needs never to leave his living room, since he can undertake his journey within the confines of his own mind.

Accordingly it suits Campbell's purpose best to show that all heroes, whatever their background, are more or less alike at least in the pattern of their lives and the nature of their aspirations. "There is," says Campbell to Moyers in the television series, "a certain typical hero sequence of actions which can be detected in stories from all over the world and from all different periods of history. Essentially it might even be said that there is but one archetypal mythic hero whose life has been replicated in many lands by many people." All founders of religions have gone on a quest, with departure, fulfillment, and return. Moses ascends the mountain, for example, Jesus goes into the desert, Greek heroes found cities—and we, well, each of us founds his or her own life. In the book *The Power of Myth,* the notion of return is reinforced by a visual representation of the last return of Jesus, at the supper at Emmaus, when he appeared to his disciples after his death.

Because I try to look at the past for what it can tell us about the past, if I had been there in place of Bill Moyers, I would have tried to interrupt: "But, Professor Campbell, Greek founding heroes don't return. However much they are revered after their deaths in the new cities they have established, no one in their old home wants them back. That's why they left home in the first place." Some of them were exiled because they committed a crime, like Alcmeon, who, in common with Orestes, murdered his mother in order to avenge his father; others because they did not fit in, like Battus, who stammered and was sent from the island of Thera to found the colony of Cyrene on the north shore of Africa. What do Alcmeon and Battus have in common with Moses or Jesus? Probably not very much. Greek foundation heroes are not teachers but tough guys; they are revered after their deaths not because they were good or kind but because they were powerful.

But meanwhile in the book, Campbell, explaining to Moyers the process of self-discovery, has turned to another Greek myth, this time that of Odysseus (a hero who did come home) and his son Telemachus, who goes from his home on the island of Ithaca to the mainland to "find his father." Here Campbell emphasizes the psychological meaning of the myth: Telemachus's journey is a rite de passage from childhood. But (I would have interjected) Homer in the *Odyssey* says nothing about the development of Telemachus's or anyone else's psyche. Certainly the journey gives Telemachus his first chance to act independently. But it also gives him the opportunity to learn what in his isolation at home he would have had no direct way of knowing, about his father's achievements at Troy and how much other heroes respected him and relied on him. This knowledge enables him to remain loyal to his father, and to recognize him when he at last manages to return. Thus whatever the story may be made to say to us about our own coming of age, to the Greeks it conveyed even more strongly another message: a good son honors his father.

But then Campbell isn't trying to give a direct account of these myths as the ancients would have learned about them. As he himself says, he had a low regard for academic specialization, because it tends to keep scholars from affirming the "life values" of their subjects. Scholars, he thought—and this is

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why he didn't try to finish his own doctorate—looked at myths as interesting things "to fool around with"; whereas for Campbell they had messages that were "valid for life." So perhaps it isn't fair for a specialist such as me to complain that Campbell overlooks details or occasionally gets a mythological fact wrong. Does it really matter that he thinks that Telemachus went to ask the god Proteus where his father was, when in fact it was his friend Menelaus, and that Menelaus was not looking for his father but rather seeking to learn from Proteus about how to get home? Shouldn't we classicists be grateful that Campbell believes the *Odyssey* still has something important to say to people living in the modern world?

As a specialist academic I'd first be tempted to reply that I am not satisfied, because it does matter if one gets one's facts wrong. I couldn't teach ancient Greek very well if I didn't care about accuracy. But since I, too, believe that myths have something to say about "life values," I have some sympathy for what Campbell was trying to do. I don't think that I could teach anything that I didn't believe was worth learning. So in case it isn't considered fair to complain that Campbell tends to make the details of ancient narratives conform to his own interpretations, I'll concentrate instead on his notions of what myth can teach us about ourselves.

The idea that myth represents the process of individual development of course derives from the work of C. G. Jung; so too does Campbell's method of analysis, which combines narratives from many cultures with illustrations, ancient and modern, of universal symbols. This basic theory of myth, when presented in this form, is both memorable and attractive, because it avoids professional jargon and offers specific examples instead of generalizations.

Some of Jung's colleagues directed their discussion of myth to highly educated, even scholarly audiences. Campbell, however, clearly aims at communicating with the widest possible American audience. Even in his writings, his tone is more casual, his references less learned, and his messages briefer than the standard Jungian fare. His lessons can be readily absorbed and applied without further study or a special course of therapy. In fact, he assures us that we already have within ourselves powerful equipment that can reveal to us everything we need to know. As Campbell long ago wrote in *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* (1949): "In the absence of an effective general mythology, each of us has his private unrecognized, rudimentary, yet secretly potent pantheon of dream. The latest incarnation of Oedipus, the continued romance of Beauty and the Beast, stand this afternoon on the corner of Forty-second Street and Fifth Avenue, waiting for the traffic light to change."

Moyers recalls how he thought of these dramatic words when, just after Campbell's death in 1987, he came out of the subway at Times Square and felt the "energy of the pressing crowd." Certainly it is exciting to think that every life is at some level an enactment of significant myth and fairy tale, and that anyone can, at least potentially, be a hero. But endowing ordinary actions with extraordinary significance also means making extraordinary achievements seem ordinary and trivial. Campbell's informal storytelling style brings gods and heroes down to our level, and makes foreign situations conform to familiar patterns: "fe fi fo fum," says the buffalo in Campbell's version of a Blackfoot tribal myth.

As a result, according to Campbell, "each of us is, in a way, the Indra of his own life." The gods are no longer subjects of awe. The mysterious conversation between the cave-bear and the mountain goddess that takes place during the ritual of the bear's sacrifice, unheard by men and unhearable, can be thought of as "a little socializing." The Greek gods, as so often, behave as if in a cozy sitcom: "Well, one fine day on Capitol Hill, the Hill of Zeus . . . Mount Olympus, yes—Zeus and his wife were arguing as to who enjoyed sexual intercourse the more, the male or the female. And of course nobody there could decide because they were only on one side of the net, you might say. Then someone said, 'Let's ask Tiresias.'"

According to the myth, Tiresias was asked his opinion because he had been both male and female and so was better qualified than anyone else to give an answer. Unfortunately for him, his answer—that females enjoy sex nine times more than males—angered Hera, who made him blind, but then Zeus in recompense gave him the power of prophecy. In Greek drama this gift makes him the bearer of terrifying news, always unwelcome but always true. He tells Oedipus (who refuses to

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believe him) that he is his father's murderer; he tells Creon (alas, too late) that he should release Antigone from prison. He is sinister because of his knowledge, not because of his sexual transformation, which in fact is never mentioned in any extant Greek tragedy. He was present on stage to remind the audience of the inexorable will of the gods.

In Campbell's account, there is little to fear and much even to be thankful for. According to him, the prophet's second sight derives from his sexual experience: "There's a good point there—when your eyes are closed to distracting phenomena, you're in your intuition, and you may come in touch with the morphology, the basic form of things." It is because of this knowledge, explains Campbell, that Odysseus was sent to the Underworld by the goddess Circe: "His true initiation came when he met Tiresias and realized the unity of male and female."

Here again Campbell is telling his own updated version of the story. As Homer tells it, the purpose of Odysseus's journey to the Land of the Dead was to learn from Tiresias about his return, and the prophet explained what the problems were and how he might best deal with them; he says nothing about what Odysseus himself should discover about his own consciousness. The psychology of sexuality is a twentieth-century concern; before that people seem to have been more interested in its mechanics. It is T. S. Eliot, and not Homer, whose Tiresias, "old man with wrinkled dugs," reflects on the uncommunicative lovemaking of a nameless secretary and her lover in *The Waste Land*, "I Tiresias have foresuffered all / Enacted on this same divan or bed."

But then only a hero in the twentieth century would set off on a journey with the goal of discovering himself. As a result of his travels, Homer's Odysseus saw the cities of many men and knew their minds. He already knew why he was going home, and what he would find there, seven years before he arrived, because Tiresias had told him. Dante's Ulysses refuses to deny himself "experience of the unpeopled world"; "you were not created to live as brute beasts, but to follow virtue and knowledge." Only after the Romantic movement does the purpose of the hero's journey become the search for self-understanding that Eliot describes in *Four Quartets*:

> We shall not cease from exploration
> And the end of all our exploring
> Will be to arrive where we started
> And know the place for the first time.

It is this Romantic hero's journey that in the works of Freud and Jung has been transferred from myth and fiction into a kind of science. But a voyage of self-discovery resembles Odysseus's only inasmuch as it includes an eventual return home.

It may now be reasonable to ask what it is Campbell expects us to learn from myth if the "life values" he extracts from myth are not so much derived from other, more distant cultures, as projected on them from our own. It would be quicker to look in a mirror, though less interesting, and certainly less reassuring. The myths, at least as Campbell tells them, perform the function of a thinking man's Ann Landers, since they offer the comfort that everyone everywhere has been, is, and will go through the same experiences as ourselves.

But how applicable will these familiar values be for Americans in the twenty-first century? In significant ways they are already obsolete. Consider, for example, Campbell's notion, derived from Jung, of the archetypal female. At first it would seem that women are being accorded equal importance, since the hero can be truly initiated, or integrated as a personality, only when he "comes to realize the unity of male and female." But from everything else that Campbell says, it appears that this unity is primarily mystical, since in all practical respects, he seems to think that a female's life experience and behavior is fundamentally different from a male's.

In *The Power of Myth*, the archetypal female is essentially passive and giving, like the earth: "The human woman gives birth just as the earth gives birth to the plants. She gives nourishment, as the plants do." The Goddess who represents all women is the creator, and her own body is the universe; hence sexuality and childbirth are sacred, so that even ordinary acts of lovemaking, and certainly marriage, are forms of worship. Through these rites, each one of us affirms that he is part of this universe, and the universe loves us because it does not discriminate among us—the mother loves all her children, even the stupid and naughty ones. It is clearly the powers of

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the female body that Campbell wishes to celebrate, and not the force of the female will or determination of mind.

After discussing Telemachus's coming-of-age, Campbell states that initiation is harder for the boy than the girl because life "overtakes" women, but boys need to *intend* to be men. Menstruation and then pregnancy turn girls into women, whether they're ready for it or not. Campbell doesn't say and Moyers doesn't inquire, but Campbell seems to mean that women come of age passively both in real life and in ritual and myth. Apparently Campbell accepts the Jungian doctrine that the decisive moments in a woman's life are physical, and in a sense, inflicted on her: menarche, deflowering, conception, and childbearing.

Few modern women, I think, would want to claim that they have learned very much about themselves from the onset of menstruation. It is also true that even in Greco-Roman myth a woman's physical maturity doesn't guarantee knowledge. Often women seem to learn only sometime after their first confrontation with men, whether physical or political. The beautiful Psyche begins to grow up only after she has become pregnant and sets out on a long and difficult journey to find her husband. Nothing is said in her story—or in fact in any Greek myth—about menstruation. It is only in medical treatises that we learn of the psychological problems that afflict young virgins after menarche. The doctor prescribes marriage and pregnancy, since presumably motherhood would bring them the necessary emotional stability.

If the "universal" hero-pattern Campbell derives from the myths seems to exclude women and also men living before or after the twentieth century, perhaps it is time to ask how well the pattern describes the life of men in our own time. It seems at least to match the course of Campbell's own life, since he claims to have been able to follow his own "bliss," first by renouncing worldly values, and then by reading widely in the wisdom of the past. Specifically, during the Depression, he lived alone in a remote and primitive cabin, and studied and read; he believed that he was being guided by invisible hands on a predetermined track, which enabled him to live the life that he ought to be living.

Even if this pattern of departure, fulfillment, and return is not universal, in outline it will be familiar to any Christian. In the New Testament, Jesus was led by the Spirit of God into the wilderness, where he was tempted by the Devil; but he resisted, and the Devil left him, and angels appeared and waited on him (Mt. 4.1–11). Jesus advises his audience not to worry about material possessions: "do not worry and ask, what are we to eat? what are we to drink? What shall we wear? All these things are what the heathens are looking for, but your heavenly father is aware that you need all these things" (Mt. 6.31–2).

When Jesus came out of the wilderness, he went directly to Galilee, and began to preach "repent, for the kingdom of Heaven is at hand" (Mt. 4.17). In *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*, Campbell describes the problems the Hero faces on his return to the World: "Why attempt to make plausible, or even interesting, to men and women consumed with passion, the experience of transcendental bliss? . . . The easy thing is to commit the whole community to the devil and retire again into the heavenly rock-dwelling, close the door, and make it fast. But if some spiritual obstetrician has meanwhile drawn the *shimenawa* (curtain) across the retreat, then the work of representing eternity in time, and perceiving time in eternity, cannot be avoided." It is also possible to discern in this passage dim echoes of Plato's account of the philosopher's return to the cave. But whereas the philosopher goes back in order to try to show the prisoners in the cave that they are not seeing reality, Campbell's hero goes to proclaim the mystery of transcendental bliss, representing eternity in time and time in eternity.

In urging that we follow only the pattern of Jesus' life and not his teaching, Campbell places great emphasis on the rebirth or return at the end of the hero's journey. Because action or imagination matter more than rational thought, even pagan experience may be counted as heroic, and all myths can be seen to have meaning for us, at least in the forms that Campbell gives them. Perhaps surprisingly to anyone familiar with Homer, Odysseus can be included in the company of the heroes who experience spiritual transcendence. According to Campbell, after Odysseus leaves the island of the Sun—"the island of highest illumination," he dies to the things of this world and is reborn to a new life. In Homer's account, nothing is said about the

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light of the Sun. Odysseus recognizes where he is by the lowing of the cattle Tiresias has warned him not to let his men touch, if they are to survive to return home. Far from being the moment of highest illumination, it is the nadir of his journey, the beginning of seven years of lonely isolation from other human beings, and of intensified desire on his part to return to his wife and native land.

It is from Christianity also that Campbell (following Jung) seems to derive his notion of the Universal Goddess, without distinct personality, whose principal role is maternal. In Campbellian myth the Universal Goddess represents the womb from which the hero is born and to which, although symbolically, he must return, first when he "dies" in order to be reborn, and then at his actual death (and rebirth to eternity). As such she is the bestower of life, the transition and threshold.

Of all the features of his "universal" pattern, this archetypal Goddess best exemplifies the cultural limitations of Campbell's vision. Far from representing what men and women worshipped in the second millennium B.C.E., she is rather a projection of an ideal European housewife, whose sexuality exists only to serve a larger purpose of creating and nourishing. In effect, she exists primarily to serve and inspire mortal men. But in practice (as opposed to theory) the Greek and Roman goddesses only take an occasional direct interest in human life, for example, to help or protect a lover or a son. Each of the many different goddesses had her own distinctive powers and considerable independence from the others as well as from the male gods. These goddesses were worshipped not so much because some of them loved their children, but because they were powerful—the virgin Athena, for example, could borrow her father Zeus's thunder and lightning when she chose.

In his survey of Greek mythology in *The Masks of God,* Campbell complains that although there was a period when the Goddess cults predominated, they were later repressed under the male hegemony of the Olympian gods under Zeus. This patriarchal religion, he claims, reduced the stature of women in myth to "mere objects." But it is his own, and not Greek mythology, that tends to strip women of all but their most elemental sexual characteristics, and to emphasize their role as brides or mothers. In his account of the story, Psyche is merely obedient, and never shows the initiative that in the ancient story ultimately leads to her rescue and her being reunited with her husband.

In projecting basically modern Christian values onto ancient myths, Campbell undoubtedly thought he was acting in the best interests of both his readers and the civilizations that he studied. It may not be coincidental that Campbell formulated his most influential works around the time that regard for Arnold Toynbee's universal history was at its highest. Both Toynbee and Campbell sought to find the common purposes and visions that were shared by men in remote times and civilizations. Toynbee defined *civilization* as "an endeavour to create a state of society in which the whole of mankind will be able to live together in harmony, as members of a single, all-inclusive family." Campbell proposed a new mythology of the planet Earth, as seen from a great distance, without national, racial, or religious divisions. Both Toynbee and Campbell, while decrying narrow sectarianism, especially as evinced in the Hebrew Bible, saw the various materials that they studied through the filter of their own basically European and Christian cultural values.

At a time when there is much insistent talk about paying more attention in the curriculum to other cultures, it is not surprising that Campbell's peculiar brand of universalism is again being taken seriously, on the grounds that it serves as an introduction to multicultural experience. Clearly it offers everything that present-day faculties are looking for: consideration of non-Western ideas, new information presented in clear language, and apparent psychological validity. It challenges us to compare Western mythologies with Eastern, but without threatening our most cherished beliefs about human experience. But although as an expression of religious belief it is perhaps an improvement over what some of us learned in Sunday school, no one should hope to find in it an authoritative guide to any religion other than Campbell's own.

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Books

Reflections on the Deaning Trade

EUGEN WEBER

TO RISE ABOVE PRINCIPLE: THE MEMOIRS OF AN UNRECONSTRUCTED DEAN. *By Josef Martin* (pseudonym). *University of Illinois Press. $19.95.*

"I found it exhilarating to be dean." Three times in the three pages of his introduction, Josef Martin (a pseudonym) repeats the phrase; and I, after a six-year term as Dean of the College of Letters and Science at UCLA, agree. Running (not ruining) a large enterprise and a lot of lives can be a heady business. Even the semblance of power will put one on one's mettle. Even the hostility it evokes provokes some satisfaction. "Censure," another dean remarked long ago, "is the tax a man pays to the public for being eminent." I am not sure how eminently eminent deans can be held to be. But Swift's words remind us of the origin of the trade. The first dean *(decanus)* was probably a monk set to rule over ten of his fellows, then a clergyman invested with powers of jurisdiction, or disciplinary functions, as well as precedence over his fellows. In medieval universities, the dean sometimes took precedence over the rector. He was the senior professor who presided over the meetings of his faculty, or led it in procession, a far more visible personage than he would be today.

When Josef Martin remarks that administrators ought to have been successful professors before they became administrators, he harks back to our origins, but he clouds the issues. Some deans are export rejects. Martin was evidently a successful professor; but he never comes through as a full-hearted administrator, never treats his office with the humorlessness it deserves—which is all to the good. Deans administer indeed; but, like department chairmen, only more so, their major function is as a liaison between faculty and "the administration" in which they share. Even when they stem from an academic background, presidents, chancellors, and their expanding courts tend to become professional managers and bureaucrats. Deans of the faculties or of a college are (or should be) much closer to their colleagues. Their emergence from their profession's ranks is relatively recent. Their return to teaching and research will be natural: not a sign of failure, but another shift, the end of a term of office.

Professors, as Martin says, learn how universities ought *not* to be administered. As deans they have a chance to apply their learning. Dressed in a little brief authority, they will try to avoid some of the pitfalls that lie in wait for those who have inhaled too deeply of their power. They will not always succeed, but if they are fortunate, they will enjoy the passage. That, clearly, is what Josef Martin thought. And did. His pages paint a picture of the dean as a wandering scholar who relishes the opportunity to sample more human vagaries than the limited chances his teaching life had brought his way, and to savor them.

Not quite all, perhaps. In our colleagues' eyes, it seems as hard for a dean to enter the Kingdom of Heaven as it is for an assistant professor to get out of Purgatory. "One of my sadder discoveries as dean was the degree to which administrators are not seen as human." The human race, to which so many of us belong, ends, it would seem, at the doors of

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the administration building. The way mortals are often treated when they enter administrative positions argues for such a view. They wander in the desert and find no promised land. Martin can see their point, up to a point. He would like administrators—deans, at any rate—to be considered human. But he concedes that "service" units of the university (accounting, personnel, and so on) earn that description only by courtesy of Newspeak.

"A dean qua dean has no friends, and a dean qua dean encounters no disinterested people." Even as a dean, I met a lot of disinterested people—not least the men and women whom I sought to tap for gifts of money. Such university friends, like the colleagues whom I badgered to undertake thankless tasks, may have been moved by vanity as much as by public spirit. But, then, so was I. Martin's point fits more neatly when one remembers how often a dean qua dean encounters students and colleagues in situations that are adversarial or, at least, involve negotiation for advantage. Manners are a form of patience many scholars lack, altruism is a form of manners many humans never acquire. Deans have to learn at least the former, which their interlocutors may not have bothered to pick up, so a little exasperation is occasionally in order, though Martin treats most encounters equably.

Although this dean's claws are sheathed, his tongue is not. He notes that distinction in an academic specialty is not necessarily correlated with perspective or common sense. Many have observed this, but a dean's experience of his colleagues is designed to emphasize its truth. It isn't exactly that familiarity breeds contempt. But, after countless files and numerous interviews, one cannot help the feeling that many of our fellows are better dead than read.

Martin is dismayed by the unwillingness of his colleagues (he calls it cowardice) openly to express adverse judgment of their fellows: let the dean do their work for them. And no less by the insistence of faculty and students on following the dictates of their conscience without having to face the consequences. It used to be that acting on principle could involve discomfort for the actor. Nowadays, principles are more often invoked to inflict discomfort on others—a more economical approach, certainly. Like their civilian fellows, and like toffee, academic ideologues come in two kinds: hard and soft. One passes resolutions, the other sues. (Who said that sheep pass resolutions in favor of vegetarianism, wolves abstain?)

Suing is an American sport. When I was dean, a series of thefts took place in a laboratory storeroom, and the thief was identified by cameras that recorded his doings. Legal action followed, which turned what seemed like logical consequence—the firing of the culprit—into an interminable headache.

Martin is horrified "that our culture now fails to transmit the tradition or the ethic that one's word is one's bond." One might add that our culture does not comprehend personal honor. That may be due in part to the mobility so characteristic of modern life, particularly in America. Living out your life in communities where everyone knows you makes personal reputation valuable and escape from the consequences of your acts difficult. Scale and large opportunities for transition have modified this. Today, the rare opportunity for personal irresponsibility has been turned into a doctrine. No wonder that our processive nation has no respect for a legal system that we manipulate as and when we can. The law may well be feared. It is not honored.

What works in the courts works in a university. In a society dedicated to never calling a thing by name, when people appeal to reason they mean to avoid it. When they appeal to justice, they ask for privilege, which means a *private* law. Affirmative action, a euphemism for legislated exceptionality, makes privilege the law of the land. The chapter Martin devotes to its operation begins with the university attorney's advice: "I think we should give them whatever they ask for. . . . We certainly don't want the EEO people to think we're not being cooperative." The EEO had been called in the way some Nibelungen, embroiled in a family dispute, had called in the Huns. Results had been roughly similar. The EEO asked the following: "For the last six years, a list of every person—identified by sex and ethnic classification as well as name—who had held a temporary appointment, not merely in the plaintiff's department but in every department of the university; a list of all the tenure-track vacancies advertised during those six years; a list of all the temporary employees who had been interviewed for

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these positions and, if they had not been appointed, the reasons for that; a list of reasons why the others had not been interviewed, together with their vitae and the vitae of the people who *had* been interviewed; and no doubt some other items as well, which I have mercifully forgotten. . . ." If anyone wonders why budgets are on the rise, read chapter seven of Martin's book.

Proof of how far we have advanced since Nibelungen days, the suit was settled before a massacre. Martin's university granted the plaintiff tenure, in return for her written pledge that the appointment would not be taken up. Martin, the *faux-naif*, expresses puzzlement that the plaintiff would agree in writing "that we were blackmailed into granting her tenure, on the understanding however . . . that she would never take up the tenured appointment." He knows that the deal would avoid the expense of court action, the waste of time, funds, energy, and the uncertainty; yet he dislikes finding himself, as dean, in a situation where doing the principled thing (going to court) "would seem like being unprincipled, disloyal and downright unreasonable. . . ." He is obviously not a professor of law.

The plaintiff in this case had been a woman. Men, too, had recourse to legal action during his time as dean, but Martin admits that "discrimination" cases carry a more explosive emotional charge. No wonder. Certain people, whatever their sex or race, acquire a conviction that they will never be treated fairly. If such people happen to be women, homosexuals, or members of particular national, racial, or religious groups, then current history, politics, and current stereotypes will reinforce such feelings. The state, for its part, decrees that they must not be treated as individuals, but as members of a class—once underprivileged, now specially privileged. Most women, blacks, Jews, homosexuals, et cetera, make no fuss or threat and are quietly appointed, tenured, and promoted as their abilities and achievements warrant. But "it is just the same with women as with men . . . : the capable ones get on with the job and the others complain that they are being hindered or discriminated against."

When I came to UCLA, in the 1950s, the history department in which I worked numbered no women, no blacks, no Jews, only men of that race that the Immigration Service described as Caucasian. The first Italian to be accommodated as a colleague was appointed under the false impression that he was of Norwegian origin. The first man to sport a beard, unbeknownst to those who named him, was a teaching assistant from Scotland. One must admit that things have improved, and affirmative action helped to accelerate improvement. But foolishness and wrong evoke wrong and foolishness. Perhaps there is no happy medium, and we are condemned to operate only at extremes.

Not that most pleas of injustice concern affirmative action. Teaching is probably the most mutually critical profession, and constant evaluation is built into our work. Teachers evaluate students, students evaluate teachers, deans evaluate faculty, faculty evaluate each other, year after year, unto the highest ranks. On these evaluations, tenure, promotion, and salary depend—that is, security, status, and standard of living. No wonder that they give rise to contention and conflict. The wonder is that there is not more.

Contentions of injustice in such matters are sometimes founded. Prejudice, mostly personal, can harm careers, injure and haunt a victim. Closed societies generate intense personal conflicts, lasting feuds, venomous enmities. I marvel how few I have known, but they exist. Like other folk, but more so than most, intellectuals excel at wrapping selfish grudges in virtuous principle. Their rationalizations sometimes convince others and generally convince themselves that when they take to the warpath it is in a good cause. And what helps to inflict injustice upon others helps even more to imagine injustice being inflicted on oneself. Weak teaching, mediocre scholarship, an abrasive personality are more readily perceived by others. Reluctant as departments are to cast off a weak member, or penalize a tenured one, that sometimes (rarely) happens. Inevitably, the victim cannot conceive that his or her performance could account for it.

If it too often does, that is not always owing to limited ability, but more often to the fact that no one has suggested, so it seems, that life calls for choices. It is a comforting thought that the right to happiness proclaimed in the Declaration of Independence gives us the right to have our cake and to eat it too. Hard

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work itself is a relative notion. But hard work is only a beginning. It occurs to few that success in a calling must entail sacrifice. Academics accept that, in law or business, they might earn more for the long hours they put in. They seldom, however, consider that the Grail is best pursued with only the lightest baggage—that marriage, children, a home, their costs and their mortgages, limit their time, energy, and means for research and writing. They see no reason why, like other folk, they can't enjoy all at once. To say that indeed they can't is scarcely democratic, let alone humane. But intellectual success has little to do with democracy or humanity. More with monomania.

Seen in that hard light, doing your best means little when your best does not measure up to something greater. True excellence knows no external standards, only the inner drive. That is what makes it so hard to debate, or to litigate. Those who complain of injustice talk about rules and norms when the issue, too often, turns on less definable criteria.

In the University of California system, a maze of committees and procedural stages makes appointments, promotions, let alone "terminations," complex, cumbersome, time-consuming affairs. Never foolproof, of course; but fair on the whole and largely tamper-proof. The standards we apply to others, at least on paper, we apply to ourselves as well. We strive for excellence more in the rule than the observance, but lean towards indulgence more. Yet no indulgence is sufficiently lax for those who have not made it.

Here as elsewhere the major criteria in personnel actions bear on teaching and research—the latter meaning mostly research for publication. Since everybody knows about "publish or perish," someone is bound to ask, as many did ask Martin, just how much publication it takes to avoid perdition. Martin provides a sane answer: "The surest path to tenure is trod by those who do not ask the question, those who feel no need to ask the question, those to whom the question simply does not occur." Applause! A good teacher wants to teach, a good scholar must want to publish: "I never could understand the talk or complaint about the pressure and the burden on faculty to publish." Quite right. Talk about pressure misses the point. We teach, we write, because we have found out interesting things and want to tell others about them. Ah, yes. But the reward? The evaluation? The first evaluation has to be my own, and the only way to approach it is by comparing what I do only with the best: with the great figures that command my field. Many prefer to evoke a lower common denominator. The fact that an ass was granted tenure last year justifies an equally asinine decision now. The incontrovertible fact that universities harbor incompetent professors protected by tenure argues for tenuring yet more incompetents.

True incompetence and asininity are, in fact, rare. As Martin points out, no other profession subjects its members to an apprenticeship as rigorous or as long. The level of academic ability is, in general, high. The level of excellence, as in life, is more debatable. Being as good as the next is a recipe for poor tenure decisions. Good enough is *not* good enough. But, of course, what is good enough, better, or excellent remains a matter of opinion. And, when opinions differ, it is easy to fall back on something less contentious, like quantitative evidence.

This is where scientists have a real advantage over more literary types. But, even in the humanities, when quality is uncertain, quantity makes the running. It should be possible to publish *and* perish, on the ground that what has appeared in print demonstrates promise unfulfilled, or no promise at all. That is a hard argument to put over. Achieving publication is like surviving a war: it gets you a medal for just being there. Almost as hard as arguing against mediocre publications is to take arms against a host of encomiums. The weaker a personnel case, the more laudatory reference letters it seems to evoke. No wonder: obvious value needs less ponderous proof: it provides its own. More dubious arguments must be propped up by irresponsible endorsements. Colleagues who accept them are probably fond of those whom they defend—fonder than they are of their department or of students.

What have students to do in all this? Most conspicuously, students raise their voices to demand justice for those of their lecturers being refused tenure because they do not publish. Students do not know (why should they care?) that research universities are also about research. Research means publication, which brings publicity for the contents, for the author, for the institution. Publishing

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what one has found invites notice, submits the contribution to judgment, makes it accessible to use and to criticism. It also draws attention to the university, enhances its reputation, makes it more attractive to scholars *and* to students, maintains and raises the market value of the degrees the university grants to the very students who protest its way of putting them on the map.

It has been argued that men and women who do no more than teach will, over time, lose some of the excitement that only research can feed. I do not see this happen, if the teacher keeps on reading. And I know researchers who have lost interest in research, and others who never had much interest in teaching. It is hard to predict how people will turn out. The trouble is that we have to predict it when tenure comes up. At that stage, writing is the best predictor, provided we approach it critically (which we often don't), and provided that keen scholarship is balanced by keen teaching.

Unfortunately, good teaching is even harder to establish than quality scholarship. Like great letters of reference, teaching is often called into evidence when a case is weak. That is why Martin is right to say that "publish or perish" is mandated less by administrators than by a faculty consensus—a lazy conspiracy—not to count pedagogical effort or achievement. How do you expect men and women who would rather not bother to reach a considered opinion about a colleague's book to bother with teaching performance?

Teaching is much like acting, except that the teacher writes the lines as well. Great acting is easy to recognize; likewise, fine teaching is not difficult to identify. Truly bad teaching is not a secret either, and it is sometimes easy to remedy by simple advice (don't mumble) or by firing. At other levels, evaluation comes harder, the criteria are more vague, the critics—mostly students—even less trustworthy than critics in the media. What, after all, have undergraduates to go by? Or the teachers who address them? They have no common culture, no common references, few shared values. Before they came to college, lower schools had equipped their students with little knowledge and less work discipline. They read with difficulty, their writing is laborious, their attention span is limited. Undergraduate appreciation goes to entertainment, or to trendiness, or to the ease that comes with simple information conveyed in undemanding terms. I speak in general, of course, and never found undergraduate teaching to pose problems—just to cause frustration. But, in the absence of general standards of culture or instruction, teaching in the arts, letters, humanities, and social sciences becomes a hit-or-miss affair: hitting some, missing many others, hard to pin down in objective terms.

Moreover, academics, used to judging each other according to intellectual accomplishment (or what is held as such), value undergraduate teaching less because it seldom involves original contributions to knowledge. The best proof of this is professorial readiness in large universities to expose helpless undergraduates to almost equally helpless graduate teaching assistants who have been selected to teach not for their talent in communication of knowledge but for their ability to read lots of books and write bulky papers.

So undergraduates have a point: a very important point. They do not care that fine scholars can be fine teachers, too, and often are. They do not care that some lousy scholars also make lousy teachers. They only know that exciting teachers are rare, and they do not want to lose the ones they have enjoyed. Some enjoyable or exciting teachers communicate sheer nonsense, and others burn out quickly. Nevertheless, there is and there should be a place for non-scholar teachers in research universities. They are called lecturers or senior lecturers. They are expected to teach more hours, they are not expected to do research or to write, and they are often paid lower salaries. That is how complaints of inequity tend to arise, as do perfectly human grudges.

A university is one of the most elitist communities we have, and that's how it should be. But superiority can only be borne, if it is borne at all, when it is evident. It is not always evident with us, and lecturers note this with bitterness. It rankles especially when their inferior status and inferior pay are justified by allegations of the research expected from other ranks. Lecturers note that university teaching, a privilege to the committed, can be equally attractive to some who are idle, mediocre, disoriented. They know colleagues who were given regular tenure for a book they wrote, sometimes *in extremis*, who rust on

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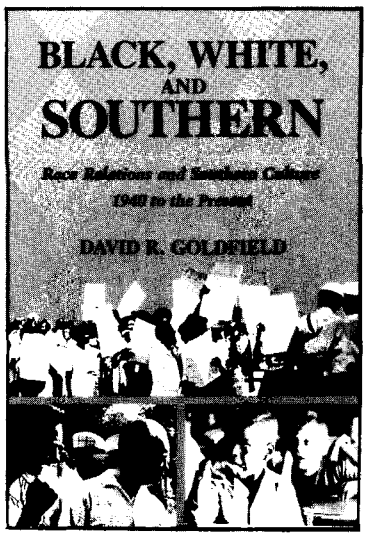

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their laurels and yet advance almost as fast as more proliferous ones. They do not conclude that these laggards should be deprived of tenure; rather that they, lecturers, should be granted tenure. The lower common denominator is easier to invoke than the higher (un-) common factor. As for the dean, his job is to mollify, comfort, and inspire the insulted and aggrieved, not to tell them that they are being immature, irresponsible, or unrealistic. Let alone that they could be right.

One occasion when deans are sorely tempted to talk of realism, or impugn its absence, is when their professors invite them to match offers from other universities. The chapter Martin devotes to this academic exercise is entitled "I don't want to leave, but. . . ." My colleagues would do well to read it, before they paint themselves into a corner.

My own view of outside offers is that it is a good idea to try to meet the market: not only to keep a valued colleague who might not leave anyway, but to keep him or her from staying on disgruntled. Gruntled colleagues are more pleasant to live with and a better value all around. On the other hand, some colleagues are better dispensed with, and an outside offer may provide the only chance to get rid of them. As a general rule, any faculty can probably be improved by simple decimation. But such expeditious ways are passé today (see my paragraphs on legal action). One should judge a dean not only by how many scholars he can attract and retain, but by how much dead wood he can tactfully unload when the occasion offers. This is something Martin doesn't mention, probably because he is too nice a guy.

Fortunately, being well disposed has in no wise dimmed his mind. There is much practical wisdom in Martin's pages. His view of our ability to initiate academically substantive projects is darker than my own: he claims deans can't; I found we can, though only few. It is in this as it is with students: if you win over 5 or 10 percent, you are not doing badly. The same with academic initiatives. On the other hand, no one can gainsay Martin's estimate of the narrow limits of a dean's powers: we can delay but rarely block, we can sometimes help individuals "to do a great right, do a little wrong." We can bend a rule, and I think we should as often as cases warrant. Rules are made to be broken, but not people. Most of the time, though, keeping the wheels turning, keeping routine on the road, takes all our time, energy, and savoir faire.

Martin mentions that procrastination, bad in professors, can be good for administrators. Much that comes to a chairman or a dean, he tells us, "is best handled by doing nothing at all, or by only pretending to do something, and innumerable other matters are better handled slowly than promptly." He does not go on to say how useful, in such a context, committees can prove. If you don't want something to happen, appoint a committee. If you do want something to happen, appoint a committee, too—you have to, anyway. In either case, make sure who is on it.

There is another matter that Martin raises but does not carry through. He criticizes faculty reluctance to establish a firm curriculum, the intellectual laxness of smorgasbord offerings. Scientists tell *their* students exactly what to study: no nonsense about options when teachers show the way. Humanities and the social sciences, on the other hand, meet open minds in open order only. The broad choice that they offer suggests that students judge what will do them good as well or badly as mature scholars can. Decades of scholarship, apparently, give faculty no right to determine what students should study. If that is so, asks Martin, "what can we claim is valuable about learning, if we can't claim a measure of superior wisdom from our learning?"

True: the exact sciences have a learning canon and an apprenticeship that leads up to it. The rest of us meander. So does society, and the university with it. The times, not long gone by, are past when the university spoke with one voice, however muted, and however stifled those who disagreed. Today we recognize no national credo, no common values, no dominant class but only diversity. I do not say this is good (quite the contrary), but the curriculum reflects it. One course praises the fire, another the fire brigade. Facts are free and equal, their interpretations more so. True or false are left to objective tests, and to the sciences. There is no right curriculum, only those compromises on which the faculty voted—at least, a majority of the minority that bothered to turn out and vote. As for the dean, he is not even *primus inter pares,* but rather just another administrator, as Martin somewhere said. The

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message that the university conveys, like a wall full of cuckoo clocks, is a cacophony.

But ending on a negative note would be unfair to such a good-humored book. There are plenty of aphorisms to keep us cheerful: A department chairman is like a gardener who is allowed to spread manure but never to weed or prune. One can lead a horse to water and watch it drown. Never attribute to malice what can be explained by incompetence. If a thing is not worth doing, it's not worth doing well. And he quotes Dame Edith Evans: "When a woman behaves like a man, why doesn't she behave like a nice man?"

Mr. Martin, Dr. Martin, Professor Martin (in France he would be *Dean* Martin to the end of his days) would be a pleasant man to dine and chat with. I conclude this from the tone of the book: critical but indulgent, humorous and unpretentious, philosophical but spiced by acerbity. Only a little acerbity. Far too nice to be a dean, he must have been an ideal dean nevertheless. One heartily joins in the toast once proposed by the Reverend W. A. Spooner, from New College—the one who said, "I remember your name perfectly, but just can't think of your face"—when he calls upon us: "Let us drink to the queer old Dean."

Quiet—Author Suffering

THE WRITING LIFE. *By Annie Dillard. Harper & Row. $15.95.*

Reviewed by BRUCE BAWER

Annie Dillard's is a literary career with a difference. Her Pulitzer Prize-winning *Pilgrim at Tinker Creek* (1974) was the first of seven nonfiction books that she has published, all of them so difficult to classify that one hardly knows in which section of the bookstore to look for them. Nature? Philosophy? Religion? Biography? Travel? Belles Lettres? New Age? Dillard's putative topics differ from book to book, but her underlying thematic concerns remain the same: the mysterious nature and significance of life, the enigmatic role of human existence and creativity in the universe, the eternal omnipresence of God. Dillard herself acknowledges, on the first page of *Living by Fiction* (1982), that "this is, ultimately, a book about the world. It inquires into the world's meaning. It attempts to do unlicensed metaphysics in a teacup. The teacup at hand, in this case, is contemporary fiction." The statement applies as well to Dillard's other books, with the difference that in, say, *An American Childhood* (1987) the "teacup" is Dillard's own early memories; in *Encounters with Chinese Writers* (1984) it is a series of cross-cultural authors' gatherings; in her latest book, *The Writing Life,* it is the act of literary creation.

The epigraphs with which Dillard prefaces many of these books (or the chapters within them) give a good sense of her characteristic tone. The opening quotation of *Pilgrim*—an assemblage of meditations inspired by the natural wonders of Dillard's then Blue Ridge Mountains habitat—comes from Heraclitus: "It ever was, and is, and shall be, ever-living Fire, in measures being kindled and in measures going out." Dillard's sole collection of poems, *Tickets for a Prayer Wheel* (1974), features a line from the naturalist John Muir: "Beauty beyond that everywhere, beneath, above, made and being made forever." *Living by Fiction* quotes Teodor de Wyzewa: "Art must recreate, in full consciousness, and by means of signs, the total life of the universe, that is to say, the soul where the varied dream we call the universe is played." And *The Writing Life* opens with a *mot* from Emerson: "No one suspects the days to be gods." No one, of course, except Dillard. In the world according to Dillard, every day is a god, and every sentence a fervent prayer. In book after book, she maintains the ardent, transcendental tone of her epigraphs, intensely rendering moments when she feels "more alive than all the world," her prose dense with exorbitant conceits, with repetitions that are designed to be incantatory, and with grand-sounding, abstraction-ridden pronouncements: "Knowledge is impossible." "The universe is illusion merely." "Of faith I have nothing, only of truth." "Our life is a faint tracing on the surface of mystery." *Holy the Firm* (1977), a nature journal composed during a period when Dillard lived alone near Puget Sound, begins in typical fashion:

✪ BRUCE BAWER is the author of a collection of essays entitled *Diminishing Fictions*, published by Graywolf Press.

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Every day is a god, each day is a god, and holiness holds forth in time. I worship each god, I praise each day splintered down, splintered down and wrapped in time like a husk, a husk of many colors spreading, at dawn fast over the mountains split.

I open my eyes. The god lifts from the water. His head fills the bay. He is Puget Sound, the Pacific; his breast rises from pastures; his fingers are firs; islands slide wet down his shoulders. . . . This is the one world, bound to itself and exultant. It fizzes up in trees, trees heaving up streams of salt to their leaves. This is the one air, bitten by grackles; time is alone and in and out of mind. The god of today is a boy, pagan and fernfoot. His power is enthusiasm; his innocence is mystery.

Dillard is capable of carrying on in this vein for dozens of pages at a time. As a rule, however, her images are notable more for their audacity than for their effectiveness, failing either to produce a clear picture in the mind's eye or to make a coherent point. Not infrequently, they cross the border into unintelligibility. "Time and space," Dillard declares in *Holy the Firm*, "are in touch with the Absolute at base." And: "When the dazzling dark breaks over the far slopes of time, then it's time to toss things, like our reason, and our will." While such prose may quite sincerely be intended to convey a sense of wonder and immanence, it generally reads as if its chief purpose is to let us all know, beyond any possible doubt, how sensitive its author is to the glorious mysteries around her; at times one even has the impression that Dillard is less genuinely taken by the world around her than by her own endless capacity to respond effusively to it. Indeed, despite the rhapsodic, detail-heavy references to earth and ocean and sky that abound in their pages, Dillard's books too often feel airless and confined; there is, one feels, too much of the author here, and too little of other people.

What's more, when her fellow humans do step onstage, Dillard can sound remarkably insensitive. Observing a hospital patient who has been badly burned, she imagines herself addressing the woman: "If you're scarred, you're scarred. People love the good not much less than the beautiful, and the happy as well, or even just the living, for the world of it all, and heart's home." How callous this is! Dillard shows no sign at all of having had her view of things shaken (or her prose rhythms disturbed) by the woman's tragedy; instead of empathizing with her horror, instead of being shocked by it into harsh new insights, Dillard makes this tragedy an occasion for yet more glib, graceful generalities. She comes across as exploitative, heartless. And such heartlessness is especially disturbing in an author who can solemnly announce (in *Pilgrim*), "I want to think about trees," and who (in the 1982 book *Teaching a Stone to Talk: Expeditions and Encounters*) can profess to wonder, "What does a weasel think about?" Dillard's inability to show as much interest in the thoughts of the woman in the burn ward as in those of a weasel underscores a cardinal weakness of her books: that, for someone who depicts herself as relentlessly inquisitive about God's creation, and who strives to put into words every trifling, nebulous thought that crosses her own mind, Dillard shows very little curiosity about or sensitivity to her fellow human beings.

"Why," she wonders in *Teaching a Stone to Talk*, "do we people in churches seem like cheerful, brainless tourists on a packaged tour of the Absolute?" The question takes one aback, for in it Dillard hits precisely on another of her weaknesses: namely, that she comes off not as a "habitan" (to borrow Whitman's word) of God's creation but as a gushing tourist, too zealous and impatient in her quest for the Absolute, too quick to assert her discovery of it, and too passive in her ultimate relation to it. A third problem is, simply, dullness. "Nothing is going to happen in this book," Dillard brags at the outset of *Holy the Firm*. "There is only a little violence here and there in the language, at the corner where eternity clips time." And it's true: nothing does happen. Dillard yammers on in grand and obscure fashion about time, death, beauty, innocence, the weather, water bugs, mockingbirds, and the thoughts of weasels; but she doesn't really say much of anything. Indeed, the apparent intent of books like *Pilgrim* and *Holy the Firm* is to steer clear of ideas—to eschew cognition, as fully as possible, the more purely to experience and express physical and spiritual sensation.

The unfortunate irony in all this is that Dillard really has quite a good mind (she was trained as a literary critic, and describes herself as having "a background in theology"), and when she allows herself to think, she usually does an impressive job of it. Amid the

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naturalistic ditherings in *Teaching a Stone to Talk* are some well-argued criticisms of the use of secular music in church services; likewise, in *Living by Fiction* she offers an absorbing and straightforward discussion of the ontology, morality, and ever-changing strategies of literary fiction, arguing that "literature as a whole has moved from contemplating cosmology—Dante—for the sake of God, to analyzing society—George Eliot—for the sake of man, to abstracting pattern itself—Nabokov—for the sake of art." Its consistent clarity and precision, its devotion to principle and refreshing indifference to trends, and its lively, unashamed intelligence make *Living by Fiction* Dillard's finest book by far, and one can only wish that in her other volumes she had heeded her own testimony in its pages that "the life of the mind . . . is, despite some appalling frustrations, the happiest life on earth."

One might have anticipated that Dillard's new book on literary matters, *The Writing Life*, would share at least some of the virtues of *Living by Fiction*, but such is unfortunately not the case. If the earlier book explores literature from the point of view of the reasoning critic, the new one—in an apparent attempt to give the layman some sense of what happens when a writer sits down to work—regards the same subject from the perspective of the intuitive author in the throes of creation. If in *Living by Fiction* Dillard exalts the life of the mind, in *The Writing Life* she asserts: "Much has been written about the life of the mind. I find the phrase itself markedly dreamy. The mind of the writer does indeed do something before it dies, and so does its owner, but I would be hard put to call it living." On the contrary, she insists, a writer's life "is colorless to the point of sensory deprivation."

And so, alas, is this book (which, like most of its predecessors, is exceedingly slender, wide of margin and large of type, and comprises a series of unconnected passages that range in length from four lines to five pages). Nowhere has Dillard's prose been more aggressively vacuous and claustrophobic, and nowhere has she more tiresomely indulged her penchant for cryptic, self-dramatizing jabber, for outsized abstractions, and for pretentious and (yes) markedly dreamy imagery. "The line of words," she muses on the first

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page, "is a miner's pick, a woodcarver's gouge, a surgeon's probe. You wield it, and it digs a path you follow. . . . You make the path boldly and follow it fearfully. You go where the path leads." Four pages later, she adds: "The line of words is a fiber optic, flexible as wire; it illuminates the path just before its fragile tip. You probe with it, delicate as a worm." In succeeding pages she compares the line of words to a construction job, describes it as "finger[ing] your own heart," envisions it "feeling for cracks in the firmament," imagines it "heading out past Jupiter" toward the end of the solar system, "single-minded, rapt, rushing heaven like a soul." And she proffers this little fantasy:

> Every morning you climb several flights of stairs, enter your study, open the French doors, and slide your desk and chair out into the middle of the air. The desk and chair float thirty feet from the ground, between the crowns of maple trees. . . . Birds fly under your chair. In spring, when the leaves open in the maples' crowns, your view stops in the treetops just beyond the desk; yellow warblers hiss and whisper on the high twigs, and catch flies. Get to work. Your work is to keep cranking the flywheel that turns the gears that spin the belt in the engine of belief that keeps you and your desk in midair.

To be sure, the book doesn't consist entirely of esoteric metaphors for writing. Dillard also offers a number of anecdotes, mostly personal, that are presumably designed to illuminate the act and art of authorship. Some of these anecdotes are mundane and pointless (for example, a page-long story about a faculty-lounge teakettle that she once inadvertently scorched because she was so busy writing that she forgot she'd left it on the stove), some fantastic and pointless (for example, a weird symbolic tidbit about a typewriter exploding). She offers advice, some of it relatively lucid ("Do not hoard what seems good for a later place in the book, or for another book; give it, give it all, give it now"), some not. She asks questions and sometimes, in her own idiosyncratic manner, answers them. Question: Who teaches one to write? Answer: "The page, the page, that eternal blankness, the blankness of eternity which you cover slowly, affirming time's scrawl as a right and your daring as a necessity; the page, which you cover woodenly. . . ." (And so on for another ten lines.) Once or twice, to one's immense gratification, she actually develops an idea (for example, about "commercial intrusion" into books); but for every such instance there are ten in which Dillard, seemingly on the verge of elaborating upon an observation or an opinion, instead skips a space and—frustratingly—leaps into the next baffling anecdote, the next hyperbolic metaphor.

Dillard is as different as can be from a writer like Somerset Maugham, who—though hardly an intellectual, or even a reflective man by habit—managed to provide, in his book *The Summing Up*, an astute essay on the literary calling as well as an explicit and entertaining account of his own creative procedures. Dillard, by contrast, seems determined in *The Writing Life* to come across as vague and abstracted—engrossed with nature and art, to be sure, but in an idly sensual rather than a rigorously analytical way. "Why people want to be writers," she remarks, "I will never know, unless it is that their lives lack a material footing." And that's all she has to offer on the question; she brings it up only to confess that she has nothing to say about it. Plainly, she doesn't want any truck with concepts, doesn't want to theorize about writing; she is more comfortable declaring her ignorance, her failure to think systematically about the subjects with which this book is concerned. She recalls telling a ferryboat crewman on one occasion that she hated to write and "would rather do anything else," to which he replied: "That's like a guy who works in a factory all day, and hates it." Her reaction: "I was amazed, for so it was. It was *just* like that. Why did I do it? I had never inquired. How had I let it creep up on me?" But she has no thoughts on the topic. And so she skips a space and moves on to something else.

What's going on here? Is Dillard out to make us think she is dense? No; she's out to show us how far her sublime writerly rapture takes her from the dreary world of rational thought and logical discrimination. The baleful consequence of this strategy, however, is that she imparts a highly misleading view of the writing process. Her metaphors, for one thing, relate almost exclusively to the first-draft stage, not the rewriting stage; what fascinates her is not the deliberative work of revision but the existential act of facing the blank page, of hewing a path into the unknown. And she drastically simplifies and

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romanticizes even this first-draft stage: few writers, I daresay, are as much in the dark about where their next several pages will take them as Dillard would have the reader believe, and few, I suspect, proceed directly from beginning to end of a long manuscript without backtracking to make changes, to shift bits and pieces around, and the like.

Finally, Dillard makes writing—and artistic creation in general—seem a far less cerebral activity than it really is. She would have the reader believe that the true artist, far from shaping a work, is instead engaged in "following the work wherever it [leads]," in riding a current and "hoping the tide will turn and bring [him] in." Undeniably, there are forces involved in the creation of any piece of art that are beyond the artist's conscious control; but Dillard's view amounts to a nearly wholesale abdication of intellect, a New Age-style surrender to forces beyond oneself. Dillard concludes her book with a quotation from Teilhard de Chardin: "The world is filled, and filled with the Absolute. To see this is to be made free." Perhaps. But the Absolute does not exist apart from mind—and the sort of near-mindless pursuit of the Absolute that Dillard celebrates in *The Writing Life* has nothing at all to do with the art of writing.

Professional Andalusian

FEDERICO GARCÍA LORCA: A LIFE. *By Ian Gibson. Pantheon. $29.95.*

Reviewed by JEFFREY MEYERS

This handsomely designed biography by Ian Gibson, the leading English-language authority on Federico García Lorca (1898–1936), is based on his previous book, *The Death of Lorca* (1973), and his two-volume life in Spanish (1985, 1987). Gibson vividly recreates Lorca's Andalusian village, Fuente Vaqueros; his prosperous landowning family; the Moorish-tinged atmosphere of Granada; his desultory education in that city and in Madrid, where he lived at the culturally stimulating Residencia de los Estudiantes and eventually secured his law degree; his intellectual and artistic influences: from Luis de Góngora and the Nicaraguan poet Rubén Darío to Jean Cocteau, J. M. Synge, and the transformation scenes in *A Midsummer Night's Dream.* Gibson also portrays the background of contemporary politics: the loss of empire after the Spanish-American War of 1898, the backward monarchy of Alfonso XIII, the relatively benign dictatorship of Primo de Rivera, the idealistic hopes of the Spanish Republic in the early 1930s, and the bitter disappointment of the Civil War that began in July 1936 and led directly to Lorca's murder the following month.

Gibson is also good on Lorca's friendships with the leading artists and writers of his time: the Catholic-conservative father figure Manuel de Falla; the jealous filmmaker Luis Buñuel, who thought Lorca's early play *Don Perlimplín* was "a load of rubbish"; the pathological surrealist Salvador Dalí, with whom Lorca fell in love and to whom he wrote an ode, "the finest paean to friendship ever written in Spanish"; the handsome and talented Gustavo Durán, who became a general in the Spanish War and a close friend of Hemingway in Spain and Cuba; the poet Rafael Alberti; the playwright Juan Ramón Jiménez; the éminence grise Miguel de Unamuno; the future Nobel Prize winner Vicente Aleixandre; and, in South America, the poet-diplomat Pablo Neruda, who wrote an ode to Lorca, and the hostile *ultraísta* Jorge Luis Borges, who felt Lorca played the role of a "professional Andalusian."

The events of Lorca's provincial, self-indulgent life—apart from his friendships and his travels to New York (1929), Havana (1930), and Buenos Aires (1933–34)—are not especially interesting. The fascination of Lorca's life lies in his character, his works—and his death. Gibson's primary emphasis is on Lorca's homosexuality, on "the hidden, and often tormented side" of the sensitive and vehement poet, dramatist, pianist, folksinger, actor, director, public lecturer, and private raconteur.

Though Gibson repeatedly complains of the difficulty of obtaining information about Lorca's homosexuality, he has managed to dis-

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cover as much as one would care to know about his abhorrences and obsessions, his pederasty and his sodomy. Though Lorca had a genial family background and good relations with his parents, he remained a spoiled child, financially dependent on his father, until well into manhood. The source of his inversion developed from his fixation with his mother. Lorca—five feet six inches tall, with a large head set on a clumsy, flat-footed peasant's body, and with "light symptoms of spinal sclerosis"—believed he was unattractive to women. He was considered effeminate as a child and as an adult was known as "the Queer with a Bow-Tie." He disliked the female form, wrote of "prostitutes with breasts of scratched glass," feared heterosexuality, and in his screenplay *Trip to the Moon*, included a close-up of the female genitals with the words "Help! Help! Help!" superimposed upon it. He considered the male organ "infinitely superior, in its erect, thrusting dynamism, to the abject female affair."

Despite social condemnation, Lorca moved in homosexual circles and (as the active partner) took lovers as he found them. He tried to sodomize the anally obsessed Dalí, who later confessed he had very nearly succeeded: "That upset me a lot because I was not a pederast, and had no intention of giving in. It hurt, moreover. And so nothing happened. But I was very flattered from the point of view of my personal prestige." Dalí portrayed this experience in his painting *Atmospheric Skull Sodomizing a Grand Piano*. The envious, sharp-tongued Buñuel—well aware of Lorca's physical cowardice and self-pity—called his friendship with Dalí putrescent, condemned his aestheticism and narcissism, and predicted it would adversely affect his work. Lorca believed that Buñuel and Dalí's film, *Un Chien Andalou*, alluded to his origins and was a personal attack.

Lorca was passionately interested in popular culture: in flamenco, folklore, popular ballads, puppet plays, village theater, and the *cante jondo* of the Gypsies. He wrote his finest poem, *Lament for Ignacio Sánchez Mejías*, on the death of the courageous and cultured bullfighter. The son of a doctor, Sánchez Mejías, after a temporary retirement, had devoted himself to flamenco, the theater, and literature. He did bullfighting chronicles for newspapers in his native Seville, acted in films, and wrote a play based on the theories of Freud and set in a lunatic asylum. Drawn by the excitement and danger of the *corrida*, the forty-three-year-old Sánchez Mejías returned to the ring in 1934 and was severely gored in Manzanares, one hundred miles south of Madrid. He did not die (as in the poem) at five in the afternoon, when the bullfight started, but in a clinic in the capital, where he arrived, too late to be saved, thirteen hours after his *cornada*. In the elegy, Lorca lamented:

> It will be a long time before there's born again,
> if ever,
> an Andalusian so noble, so full of adventure.
> I sing his elegance with words that moan,
> and remember a sad breeze among the olives.
> (y recuerdo una brisa triste por los olivos).

Six years later, in Hemingway's *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, the superstitious Pilar recalls the Gypsies' premonition and tells Robert Jordan: "In the last season of Ignacio Sánchez Mejías he smelled so strongly of death that many refused to sit with him in the café." To which the aficionado Jordan replies, with hardheaded good sense: "Every one knew that Sánchez Mejías was on the road to a *cornada* because he had been too long out of training, because his style was heavy and dangerous, and because his strength and the agility in his legs were gone and his reflexes no longer as they had been."

Lorca's first plays were fiascoes, and his first volume, the *Book of Poems* (1923), was paid for by his indulgent, uncomprehending father. Lorca's first popular success, the primitive and heroic *Gypsy Ballads* (1928), had very little to do with Gypsies. His dominant themes were lost childhood, frustrated love, a sense of doom and foreboding, sexual misery, obsession with death, and a Lawrencean need to live "one's instinctual life to the full." Though Lorca always proposed the natural life "as the only possible salvation for human beings," his life was, ironically, considered unnatural by his society.

Lorca's major works are his three poetic tragedies: *Blood Wedding* (1932), which dramatizes the revenge taken on a lover who abducts a bride; *Yerma* (1934), which portrays the theme of infecundity; and *The House of Bernarda Alba* (1936), a play about domestic

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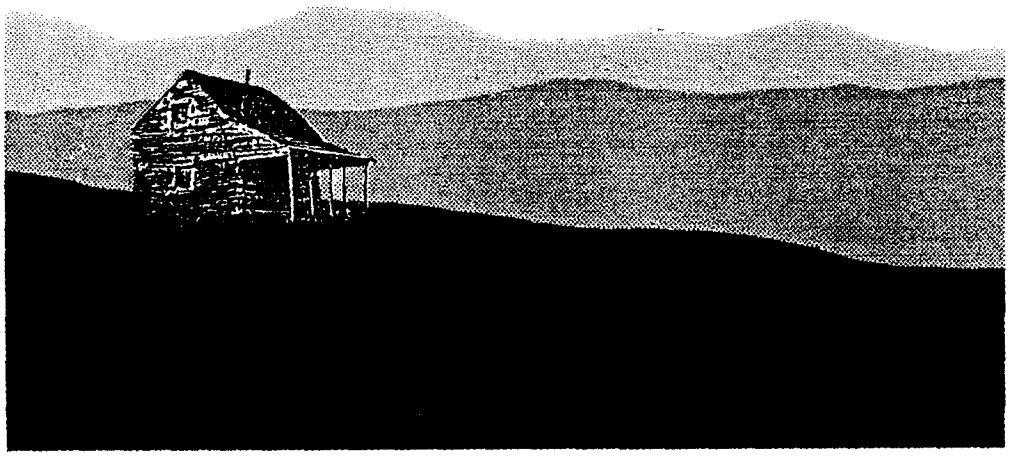

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despotism. Gibson tends to assume rather than demonstrate the greatness of Lorca's works and is unconvincing when he quotes critics who praise Lorca with meaningless banalities: he tended "towards the interpretation of the mystery of life and of man at their deepest levels" and created "a poetic interpretation of the most profound Spanish reality."

Although Gibson's research is impressive, his book does have minor factual and stylistic flaws. Lorca's death date is listed as 1939 (not 1936) on the verso of the title page; Gibson mistakenly refers to the Duke of Wellington as "Sir Arthur," calls Marinetti "Emilio" (rather than Filippo Tommaso) and says Erwin Piscator was a playwright (rather than a theatrical producer and director). He uses *hopefully* ungrammatically and *gay* anachronistically; occasionally lapses into clichés (he was "the talk of the town," which "received him with open arms") and reductive or slangy psychologizing ("some sort of defence mechanism," "one of Lorca's great hang-ups"). And Gibson frequently provides long catalogs of obscure Spaniards with triple-barreled names, which should have been deleted from the English edition.

But, in the final chapter, "The Death of a Poet," Gibson narrates the tragic end of the prodigiously gifted Lorca with true poignancy and power. On July 14, 1936, a few days before the long-feared outbreak of the Civil War, Lorca—who, like his father, had a passionate concern for social injustice—returned from the relative security of Madrid to the reign of terror in his native Granada. After the arrest of his brother-in-law, the recently elected mayor of the city, and the violent search of Lorca's country house, the poet took refuge in the center of town with a prominent Falangist family.

Gibson observes that the notorious "Red" poet had no chance of escape. He had made numerous anti-Fascist statements to the press; had publicly criticized the middle class of Granada; had written *Yerma*, a play attacked by the Catholic newspapers as an immoral assault on traditional values; he was loathed as a homosexual; and he was famous and "therefore the victim of envy—the Spanish Vice." When the police returned to his house and threatened to arrest the father if the son's hiding place was not revealed, his terrified sister told them where he was. He was arrested on August 16 and condemned to death by the Fascist governor of Granada, José Valdés. On the night of August 18, he was taken to the village of Fuente Grande, northeast of town, where the executions were carried out. We do not know if he broke down and begged for mercy or met his fate with stoical dignity. One of his assassins later boasted that he had shot "two bullets into his arse for being a queer."

An Ill Wind Blown Good

BENNY GOODMAN AND THE SWING ERA. *By James Lincoln Collier. Oxford University Press.* $22.95.

Reviewed by WILLIAM H. PRITCHARD

In "The Legacy of Benny Goodman," the concluding chapter of his new biography of Swing's king, James Lincoln Collier contends that big band swing of the sort that Goodman produced and developed was the "finest kind of popular music we have seen for centuries," rivaled only by late-nineteenth-century waltz music. Mr. Collier admits that swing was the music of his generation (he was born in 1928) but doesn't let this deter him from making his large assertion. Although no expert on the nineteenth-century waltz, I share his love of swing and also the same generational prejudice (though I was but five years old when Goodman gave his tremendous concert at Carnegie Hall in 1938). The account of Goodman's career provided in this book, notably the many commentaries on particular recordings and on the individuals who made up Goodman's various bands, doesn't of course "prove" Collier's contention about the preeminence of swing. But *Benny Goodman and the Swing Era* is important as an inducement for listening to that music, an activity I've been most satisfactorily engaged in over the past few weeks.

The decade just concluded was a busy one

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for Mr. Collier, who, after publishing a useful history of jazz in 1978, produced biographical studies of Louis Armstrong (1983) and Duke Ellington (1987). These biographies were accorded a somewhat mixed reception, with adverse criticism directed at some of Collier's sociological and psychological assumptions about black musicians, Armstrong and Ellington in particular. But however one sorts out those matters, each book was filled with keen analysis of the structure and performance of what Collier took to be the most significant recordings. The Goodman book is written along the same lines, chapters of biographical and socio-cultural commentary alternating with attention on the music itself, as heard by Collier's ears. And, as was the case in the earlier books, the accounts of Goodman and his sidemen's playing are accurate and enlightening.

Nobody would choose to consider Goodman's life for very long apart from his music. Collier takes us through familiar territory that Goodman himself has charted in his autobiography, *The Kingdom of Swing* (1939), written with the help of Irving Kolodin: growing up poor in Chicago, one of many children of an industrious, devoted father who, by trade a tailor, also used to shovel lard in the stockyards and come home exhausted, "stinking to high heaven." The phrase is Goodman's, and Collier moves from such depictions to a view of the son as "determined to rescue himself—and his father—from this." Benny Goodman's relentless drive to success is seen then, in part, as a response to a tough family life, and his less than gracious or sympathetic treatment of other people—especially of his own musicians—is seen as somehow connected to a rough-and-ready upbringing. But Collier's heart is really not in the attempt to "explain" his subject, and this reader, at least, didn't understand Goodman any more fully as the book proceeded. Goodman was not a man given to subtleties and dubieties; indeed, as Collier points out, he was virtually "unconscious of the effect he [had] on other people." Best not to worry, therefore, but turn one's mind and ears toward the music that had such a decidedly conscious effect on other people.

Collier traces Goodman's progress as a musician, beginning with his playing in synagogue and settlement bands (Hull House in Chicago had one of the latter) and his study with Franz Schoepp, possibly the finest clarinet teacher in the United States. (Collier believes that Goodman received the best early training of any jazz musician of his generation.) He dropped out of school at the earliest possible moment—at age fourteen—and two years later, in 1925, headed for California to join the Ben Pollack orchestra. This now mainly forgotten outfit was in fact, for a few years in the latter 1920s, an extremely hard-driving unit, as can be heard in recordings like "Waitin' for Katie" and "Buy, Buy for Baby." Goodman's solo on the latter elicits the following characteristically shrewd and inventive comment from Collier:

> The melody Goodman creates will not bear much extended analysis; it darts hither and thither like a dog loose in the woods smelling down faint trails and dead ends. But the solo is filled with those non-melodic tones—a downward, unstable slur in the second bar, a hanging unresolved note in the fourth bar, another unstable slur in the tenth, a quick, drop-off moan, once again left entirely unresolved in the eleventh measure. This is not one of Goodman's great solos; coherence, after all, is usually better than its absence. But the solo had drive and verve, imparted in considerable measure by the bent and twisted phrases.

This is to counter the impression that Goodman always played in a graceful, perhaps "slick" manner. To appreciate and follow this sort of writing—minutely descriptive, properly ear-centered, and engagingly metaphorical (that dog loose in the woods is an agreeable way of helping us conceive the solo's texture)—one needs to hunt up a copy of "Buy, Buy for Baby," not all that easy to come by if you're not a jazz collector. Any good writing about the structure and sound of a musical performance depends for its effectiveness on the reader's ability to hear what's being described, and the critic of a jazz solo has a particularly difficult task in that most of them aren't written down—there is nothing "there" beyond what's heard. (The *New Yorker*'s Whitney Balliett is probably the master of this sort of description.) By contrast, we can read Donald Tovey's brilliant commentaries on Haydn or Schubert symphonies not only with a pretty good sense of how a particular theme sounds (most readers will be familiar with, say, the *London* or the *Unfinished* symphonies) but with bits from the score quoted

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in the text to help us keep our bearings. Collier quotes nothing from Goodman's music, so that even the expert is going to get lost from time to time.

There appear to have been three major events in making the Goodman band famous and the Swing Era a reality to millions of Americans. The first was the Palomar Ballroom episode in Los Angeles, where, at the conclusion of a middling cross-country trip, the band suddenly hit it big. Opinions differ about whether it was "King Porter Stomp" or "Bugle Call Rag" on which the band decided to go for broke, rather than keep on playing more pallid, safer pop tunes; but the West Coast audience responded, in Collier's words, "with an enormous roar." That was in October 1935. In March of 1937 occurred the famous opening at New York's Paramount Theater. The band arrived for a rehearsal at 7:00 A.M. (they would play five shows over the course of a day, the first beginning at 8:30 A.M.) and discovered hundreds of fans already lined up, awaiting the event. Later that day those fans would dance in the aisles, crowd around the bandstand, and become the stuff of folklore. Finally, in January 1938, there was the Carnegie Hall concert, the recording of which has been in print for forty years (it is now available on compact disc) and has sold more than a million copies. Collier fully describes the central role of John Hammond, the jazz enthusiast and publicist, in not merely the Carnegie concert but in arranging recording dates, picking the musicians he wanted on them, and persuading Goodman to use both black and white players in these small group sessions. Some of the sides that resulted from those sessions, such as "Aintcha Glad" and "Dr. Heckle and Mr. Jibe" with Jack Teagarden, or "Riffin the Scotch" and "Your Mother's Son-in-Law" with Teagarden and Billie Holiday, are sources of permanent pleasure and wonder.

Collier doesn't rank Goodman, as a soloist, at the very highest level—that is, with Armstrong or Bix Beiderbecke (or, one might add, Charlie Parker). His way of putting it is to say that, unlike Armstrong, Goodman was "not a great master of drama." This means that Goodman's playing seldom, if ever, touches the heart (though he touches mine with his playing on the second half of "Benny Rides Again," one of the creations of Eddie Sauter, his early 1940s arranger). But Goodman demonstrated, Collier insists, "more rhythmic variety . . . from measure to measure, than in the playing of almost any jazz musician I can think of." This judgment is a challenge to one's sometime impression that Goodman's chief shortcoming, as the recordings piled up, was that he was too often too much the same, all facility and speed and empty technical virtuosity. By way of correction Collier asks us to listen to Goodman's "varied ways of dividing the beat, the terse fragments interrupted by long, soaring notes, the quick twist at the end of notes" as legitimating a claim for "the enormous swing which was always present in his work."

As with his book on Ellington, Collier spends time sketching in the personalities and playing styles of Goodman's various sidemen, who came and went with lightning speed as the leader's tastes and impulses dictated. (His way of indicating disapproval with someone's playing was to subject the offender to what was known as "the ray," an intense and baleful glare of distaste.) Less than two years after the Carnegie Hall triumph Goodman's orchestra showed an entirely new lineup. There are valuable portraits of Goodman's early sidekick, the great trombonist and singer Jack Teagarden; of the first "girl" band vocalist, Helen Ward (with whom Goodman had a romance); of Harry James; of Jess Stacy (he of the famous piano solo on "Sing, Sing, Sing"); of Teddy Wilson and Gene Krupa from the original trio of 1935. And not only are there these sidemen and vocalists to bring briefly to life (one of the figures Collier fails to do much with is Helen Forrest, who sang so many good tunes with the early forties band), there are also a number of gifted arrangers to be discussed and their contributions noted—Fletcher and Horace Henderson, Edgar Sampson, Jimmy Mundy, Deane Kincaid, and, most notably, Eddie Sauter. Goodman's increasing interest after World War II in classical music—in 1949 he began to study with Reginald Kell—is another of the subjects Collier takes up. One of the book's shortest chapters is titled "Marriage and the Family." Goodman is simply not very interesting when considered in those terms, although he was married (to John Hammond's sister) and was the father of two daughters.

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The serious reader will not only check Collier's assertions and judgments against his own ears, but will look up Gunther Schuller's seventy-five pages of analytical commentary on Goodman in *The Swing Era* (1989), since Schuller's commentary is not only informed with formidable knowledge of seemingly *all* the swing records ever made but also quotes bits from arrangements and solos. But the best thing to do is head down to your local record (or, let us now say, *disc*) shop, where you can pick up the Carnegie Hall concert on two CDs for seventeen dollars, or generous one-disc selections of Goodman small group sides for ten dollars each. You may end up convinced, as is James Lincoln Collier, that swing was "more sophisticated, more genuinely musical" than "virtually any popular music before or since."

False Martyr

A DEATH IN THE DELTA: THE STORY OF EMMETT TILL. *By Stephen J. Whitfield. Free Press. $19.95.*

Reviewed by HUGH MURRAY

On the night of 24 August 1955, a cocky, stocky, fourteen-year-old, weighing 160 pounds, standing 5′4″ or 5′5″ entered a small grocery store in Money, Mississippi. A number of his teenage friends watched his actions from open windows nearby. He bought a piece of bubble gum. Receiving change, he held the hand of the female clerk. He was black; she white. She had been a high-school beauty queen, she was twenty-one years old, 5′0″, 103 pounds. Her name was Carolyn Bryant, and his was Emmett Till. He made advances; she sought to escape to the back of the store where her sister-in-law, Juanita Milam, was resting. He tried to block her path. He put his hands on her waist, and in a lewd manner propositioned her. Emmett stopped his "prank," apparently with a wolf whistle. He returned to his friends, hoping they had been sufficiently impressed. Word of the inci-

✪ HUGH MURRAY's essays have appeared in *Phylon, Journal of Ethnic Studies*, and other journals.

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dent spread in the black community around Money.

Soon Roy Bryant, Carolyn's husband, also heard what had happened. He and his brother-in-law, J. W. Milam, neither of whom owned an automobile, borrowed a truck and went searching for the transgressor. When they found him, they took him for a ride. They did more than ride, however. They beat, mutilated, and murdered Emmett Till, whose death and the events following it are the subject of this book.

Even if race had not been an issue, young Emmett Till was asking for trouble. But race was important—was everything—in Mississippi in 1955, and the penalty meted out to the black Till by a white husband and his friend was extreme—even for Mississippi's white community. Thus Governor Hugh White, the Dixiecrat candidate for vice president in 1948, deplored the incident and sent an assuring telegram to the NAACP. Roy Bryant and J. W. Milam were charged with murder, and there was so little sympathy for them that they were unable to obtain counsel. During the trial itself, the new governor, James Coleman, sent a special assistant to help prosecute the two men.

After the trial, blacks boycotted the chain of small groceries owned by Milam, for which the Bryants worked, and both families lost their businesses. The local white community was also hostile, and two weeks after the trial, its leaders literally told the acquitted men to leave the county. They did, and resided in Texas for some years. Both eventually divorced. In 1981 Milam died of cancer, while Bryant later returned to Mississippi where he again manages a small grocery.

The only time Bryant and Milam appear to have won support in the local community in Money, Mississippi, was shortly before and during the trial. In his book, Stephen J. Whitfield attributes this response, in part, to the anti-Mississippi campaign conducted by the northern media. The more the northern press attacked Mississippi, the more Mississippi whites sought to defend even the indefensible actions of the brothers-in-law.

Before the trial, the NAACP's Roy Wilkins proclaimed, "It would appear that the state of Mississippi has decided to maintain white supremacy by murdering children." Though the Mississippi sheriff had originally planned to bury Till in the South, he reluctantly yielded to the demands of Till's mother in Chicago and returned the mangled and decomposed body to her there. However, a Mississippi mortician had ordered that the casket not be opened. Yet, once Till's body reached Chicago, the Mississippi seal was broken, and Mrs. Mamie Till Bradley viewed her son's body, and went limp in a wheelchair before obliging news cameras. She later held an open-casket funeral and declared "the entire state of Mississippi is going to pay for this." Thousands attended the funeral, and Mrs. Bradley received more than four thousand dollars in the mail from supporters.

By the time of the trial for Till's murder, local white opinion had swung in favor of Bryant and Milam. The entire local bar now volunteered its services to the defendants. The sheriff testified for the defense. The well-publicized trial included testimony from both Mrs. Bryant and Mrs. Bradley. The all-white jury deliberated only an hour before announcing its verdict of "Not guilty." In effect, the jury had condoned the murder of Till, and the motivation for both the murder and the jury's acquittal was intertwined with racism.

But if Bryant and Milam did not pay for their alleged crime as the law demanded of those judged guilty, they nevertheless did pay in a lesser manner. They lost their livelihoods and had to move to another state. This is hardly sufficient punishment for murder, but did they deserve execution or life imprisonment, the only other legal alternatives at that time? Moreover, if two wrongs do not make a right, neither does the second wrong transform the first wrong into a right. What is too often neglected in this case is that Till, too, was wrong or, at any rate, was looking for trouble.

Whitfield dismisses Till's act as a "prank." He views the case through the prism of "caste," a questionable approach. He contends that the importance of the Till case was that "for the first time" you couldn't have a little lynching without getting real attention. This is, I believe, an error. There had been far more publicity concerning the "legal lynching" of the Scottsboro boys, and that had occurred in the 1930s. Even after World War II there had been publicized cases involving the Martinsville 7 and Mack Ingram cases. Tuskegee reported Till's killing as a lynching.

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When opinion in Mississippi began to swing in favor of the defendants, Whitfield adds the utterly irrelevant fact that 86 percent of the southern Protestants believed in the Devil in 1966. This is an attempt to further prejudice liberal readers against Mississippians. Whitfield quotes the *New York Times* reporter at the trial to reveal the journalist's hostility to citizens carrying weapons, but Whitfield fails to note that 1989 New York, with stringent gun control laws, has a much higher crime rate than Mississippi did in 1955 or does in 1989.

In 1955 women were barred from Mississippi juries, but Whitfield suspects the trial's outcome might not have been changed because feelings of sisterhood with Till's mother may not have been strong enough to overcome racism. But what about, one wonders, feelings of sisterhood with Carolyn Bryant? Whitfield tries to excuse Till's "aggressively erotic challenge to the niceties of Jim Crow." Till was indeed challenging a system. But his aggressive, erotic challenge was viewed as an insult and a threat to a woman and, indirectly, to her family. The family punished Till; it killed him. The state merely freed that family.

Whitfield blames President Eisenhower for not speaking out on the Till case. Of course, Whitfield skips over the presidency of Ike's predecessor, the Democrat Harry Truman, who, in private conversations, usually referred to blacks as "niggers." (Merle Miller in *Plain Speaking: An Oral Biography of Harry S. Truman*, de-emphasized this side of Truman, revealing it only in a footnote on page 183.) Whitfield approvingly quotes the assessment of the historian William Leuchtenburg that it was unfortunate that Eisenhower was president in 1954 when the Supreme Court overturned the legality of school segregation. But Whitfield fails to record that in 1957 Eisenhower sent federal troops to Little Rock to support desegregation efforts being obstructed by a "moderate" Democratic governor, Orval Faubus. It was the first time since Reconstruction that a president had sent troops to the South to defend the civil rights of blacks.

Whitfield implies that one reason for Eisenhower's inaction was that he sought the votes of racist white southerners, and he declares: "The areas that the Dixiecrats found most congenial in 1948 were the same in which Eisenhower was conspicuously popular in 1952." This is misleading. The point is that in 1952 all of the states that had voted Dixiecrat in 1948 voted for the Democrat Adlai Stevenson and against the Republican Eisenhower. Similarly, Stevenson, not Eisenhower, carried most of the Dixiecrat states in 1956. Furthermore, Whitfield mentions that the Democratic representative Adam Clayton Powell from New York addressed Till protest rallies. But Whitfield fails to mention that in 1956 Powell bolted the Democratic party candidate to endorse Eisenhower.

What Whitfield unwittingly does in his book is illustrate the power of the media to convert a sexually threatening teenager into an innocent martyred child. The hatred of the South by the northern media can be discerned in its canonization of Till. Whitfield subtitles his work *The Story of Emmett Till*; but in reality Whitfield has contributed to the Emmett Till myth.

How did the myth begin? To characterize the media as "liberal" on some topics does not mean that it is liberal on all subjects. Because much of the media in 1955 was conservative socially, television stations self-censored sexual news stories. Consequently, many, if not most people who heard of the Till case heard little of the lewdness of young Till's action and thought he had been killed because he was a youthful black who had simply whistled at a white woman. And if they had heard Mrs. Bradley's account that her son would whistle to prevent a stutter caused by polio, which he had had as an infant, then Mississippians did seem to condone malicious child murderers.

The northern media strove consciously to turn Till into a martyr. In October 1955, just after the Bryant-Milam acquittal, *Life* magazine published an editorial denouncing the Mississippi jurors for finding the defendants innocent. *Life* alleged that the jurors were condoning murder and in danger of losing their souls, unlike the father of Emmett, Lóuis Till, who had lost his life fighting in France during World War II for the "American proposition that all men are equal." There was a slight error in this pious editorial. Emmett's father, Louis, had been one of the few American soldiers executed by our forces during World War II. He had been judged guilty of raping two Italian women and killing a third. While there had been sermons based upon

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Life's original editorial concerning the elder Till, it is unlikely that there were any based on its correction.

But why were intellectuals and the media so intent on creating the myth of the completely "innocent" Till? From Rod Serling's television plays to Whitfield's monograph, the mythmaking continues. There were some who wrote of Till in a more critical manner. William Bradford Huie's is the main account of what happened, though Whitfield raises some proper objections concerning the numbers involved in the beating and killing. James Baldwin's *Blues for Mister Charlie* portrayed an obnoxious belligerent teen, but Baldwin still placed the blame exclusively on anti-black racism. Susan Brownmiller's *Against Our Will* provided a feminist critique of the liberal orthodoxy, but she came under immediate attack from Angela Davis for doing so. But by the mid-1970s, what was left of the American Communist party had become the left wing of the liberal orthodoxy, which it endorsed and buttressed. Davis accused Brownmiller of resurrecting the outmoded myth of the black rapists. Unfortunately, crime statistics indicate that rapists, of all races, are all too real.

Whitfield's book is not without insights. He notes that one reason the civil rights movement defeated its opponents was that its adherents were willing to risk being jailed, beaten, and murdered to achieve their goals. By contrast, the segregationists were rarely willing to take comparable risks. But even here Whitfield, a liberal Democrat, is too ideological to acknowledge the powerful role of Eisenhower in sending troops into the South, and how this influenced the psychology of the segregationists. Eisenhower's action meant that the federal government would use force to maintain the law even against leading segregationists. The realization that Washington was hostile would have an important effect in reducing the willingness of segregationists to defy the national law in their defense of "the Southern way of life." Though Eisenhower's Democratic successors were most reluctant to use troops in the South, even they were occasionally compelled to do so by the pressure of the movement, international exposure, and the circumstances of the oppression.

Finally, Whitfield and the historian Harvard Sitkoff contend that there were links between Till and the Montgomery boycott, links between Till and the first lunch-counter sit-ins. Whitfield goes to extraordinary lengths to forge such a linkage, though he admits Rosa Parks had defied segregation on the bus in Montgomery, Alabama, years before the Till case. I find the linkage with Till spurious, even insulting. Rosa Parks was no physical threat to any white, except that her demand for a first-come, first-seat policy might require some whites to stand. The college students who sat-in went out of their way to be civil and unthreatening. They were trained in nonviolence; they wore suits and ties, nice dresses and heels. They were seeking to give the impression that they were young, responsible, courteous men and women—and they were. Recall how Malcolm X and the Black Muslims sneered at the early integrationist movement. Indeed, Whitfield asserts that in the late 1950s the Black Muslims were successful in using the Till case for propaganda.

Eyes on the Prize also reduces the roles of white liberals like Truman and the Supreme Court and begins the protest movement with Till. And so the unpleasant adolescent is transformed into a martyr. And so in 1985 the late Mayor Harold Washington declared an Emmett Till Day in Chicago. And so in Denver a statue has been erected commemorating the civil rights movement, depicting Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., following a youthful, slim, and presumably faultless Emmett Till. Thus is history blurred and truth lost.

Is *The Examined Life* Worth Reading?

THE EXAMINED LIFE: PHILOSOPHICAL MEDITATIONS. *By Robert Nozick. Simon & Schuster. $21.95.*

Reviewed by JIM HOLT

"Life or living is not the kind of topic whose investigation philosophers find especially rewarding"—so says Robert Nozick in the introduction to this book. To those who have not

JIM HOLT is a columnist for the *Literary Review* in London.

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been initiated into the austere mysteries of Anglo-American analytical philosophy, this may come as a bit of a surprise. Certainly the question "How to live?" was of paramount importance to ancient philosophers—not for nothing is it today known as "the Socratic question." The best life for man is a leitmotiv in Plato's dialogues and Aristotle's *Ethics*; as one might expect, both found compelling philosophical grounds for asserting that the philosophical life was superior to its political and pleasure-seeking alternatives. For Hellenistic movements such as those of the Stoics and Epicureans the point of philosophy was to get a purchase on peace of mind, a view in which the Romans concurred; Cicero, indeed, defined philosophy as "the art of life."

In this century, by contrast, most philosophers in the English-speaking world have scouted the notion that it is any of their business to tell people how to live, let alone to hold up their own way of life as exemplary; they fancy themselves scientists, not sages. Their meticulous and often highly technical investigations into foundations of knowledge, the semantics of natural language, the metaphysics of modality, and mathematical logic offer little enlightenment to the plain man. Even moral philosophers have fought shy of making practical prescriptions; instead they have focused on such "meta-ethical" questions as the meaning and function of evaluative language. Happiness has by and large been conceived in value-neutral terms, as a matter of satisfying whatever desires one happens to have in accordance with a "life-plan" that organizes them in a harmonious way; by this criterion a man who devotes himself to counting blades of grass—to cite a notorious example from John Rawls's *A Theory of Justice*—may be leading a life that is beyond philosophical reproach.

Recently, signs have appeared that philosophers are growing bored with this rather ascetic style of doing philosophy. Under the influence of the apostate Richard Rorty, some of them have decided to shed their quasi-scientific image and to specialize instead in "edifying conversation" with a wider audience. Although it is too early to say whether philosophy is undergoing a paradigm shift, there is certainly less reticence in the profession when it comes to dispensing practical wisdom; consider only that Robert Nozick's *The Examined Life* is one of three books bearing the same title brought out by professors of philosophy in the last couple of years (the authors of two of these books, Nozick included, express gratitude in their acknowledgments to the Rockefeller Foundation for allowing them a stint at the Villa Serbelloni in Italy, which must be a very agreeable setting in which to reflect on the meaning of life).

One wonders whether to applaud or to deplore this trend. Do the a priori methods of philosophy, in combination with the range of experience available in the groves of academe, really give philosophy professors extraordinary insight into how one should live? Robert Nozick ought to be a good test case. Although he does not have the reputation of being an especially deep philosopher, he is certainly a virtuoso reasoner, as his two earlier books attest. The justification for the "night watchman" state of classical liberal theory he presented in *Anarchy, State, and Utopia* (1974) is elegant and highly original, and in *Philosophical Explanations* (1981) he had clever things to say about nearly every issue in contemporary philosophy.

Now in *The Examined Life* Nozick turns his attention to the sorts of questions that presumably haunt all of us in our reflective moments. "My concern in writing here is the whole of our being," he states at the outset, as the reader cringes slightly. "I would like to speak to your whole being, and to write from mine." What follows is a series of twenty-seven "meditations" on everything from happiness to holiness to the Holocaust, not excluding the nature of reality. Some of the ideas in them are wildly speculative, of the kind that might inspire a science-fiction writer or titillate a listless undergraduate. In the meditation on "Dying," for instance, Nozick raises the possibility that "in death a person's organized energy—some might say spirit—becomes the governing structure of a new universe that bubbles out orthogonally . . . from the event of death. The nature of the new universe created then will be determined by the level of reality, serenity, etc., that she has managed to reach in her lifetime. And perhaps she then continues eternally as that kind of God of that universe." At other points in the book the reader is brought back to earth with a thump. In the meditation "Parents and Children," for example, Nozick spends almost all his time

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worrying about how the state should restrict a citizen's right to bequeath wealth to his descendants.

The greater part of Nozick's musing, however, issues in solemnly reported platitudes and sheer blather. Nothing, said Descartes, is so absurd that it was not said by one of the philosophers; to this I would add that nothing is so banal that Nozick does not bother to say it. Take the meditation on "Sex." In it we are informed that "sex is not simply a matter of frictional force" and that it is "better with an actual partner on the other end" (doesn't this require at least a qualifying footnote?). Nozick also observes that "an orgasm is less satisfying to the giving partner when it comes too early or too late." In other meditations it is pointed out that "a happy person tends to look upon the bright side of things," that "two people *relate* when they respond to each other," and that money "is desired for the importance it brings, as well as the things it buys." Has Professor Nozick reported these findings to the Royal Society?

The Examined Life abounds with references to the mystical doctrines of the Kabbala, Yoga, and Zen, and with stale literary allusions (memories of past enjoyments are unforgivably called "Proustian pleasures"). The author is a bit of a show-off when it comes to using mathematical metaphors; he talks about how love alters the "topology" of the self, for instance, but the only way genuinely to alter someone's topology is by putting a new hole through him or her (when William Burroughs accidentally shot his wife through the head he altered her topology, but I do not think this is what Nozick had in mind). There is a good deal of pseudo-quantitative gibberish, in which abstract concepts are subjected to mathematical manipulation as though they were numbers. And there is the odd joke: after giving his characterization of wisdom—"*what you need to understand in order to live well and cope*," etc.—the author whimsically notes that "not everything in the world fits it. (Sour cream does not.)" At its most effusive, Nozick's writing is rich in *hathos*, which has been defined as the power to excite feelings of pleasurable loathing. "We meet food in the anteroom of the mouth and greet it there . . . we make friends with it, we welcome it inside," he gushes in a typical passage. Better yet: "In the full intimacy of love, the full person is known and cleansed and accepted. And *healed*."

Toward the middle of *The Examined Life* desultory aperçus like these give way to a theory or "portrait" of reality, to which several meditations are devoted. It is reality, not happiness, that for Nozick is the *telôs* of human existence—being more real, connecting with the real, maximizing the reality of the universe. Evidently, reality is more than mere existence: for one thing, it admits of degrees, whereas existence is an all-or-nothing affair: for another, certain fictional characters—Hamlet, Antigone, Raskolnikov—make up "intensely concentrated portions of reality." The first rank of Nozick's ontological elite, however, is occupied by people who actually existed; he mentions Jesus, Gandhi, and Socrates but unaccountably omits other plausible candidates such as Haile Selassi and Victor Hugo.

In explaining just what he means by "being more real," Nozick begins with the idea of value. A thing is valuable, he avers, to the degree that it possesses "organic unity": the more complex it is and the more tightly it is bound into a whole, the greater is its value and hence its reality. This idea, whose provenance lies in Francis Hutcheson's neoclassical theory of beauty, is one for which Nozick argued cogently in his *Philosophical Explanations*; here he is content merely to observe that it jibes with our judgments of comparative value in the domains of nature, science, and morals as well as art.

At this point one might expect Nozick to take some time to explain what it means for a human life to manifest value as organic unity, perhaps with illustrations drawn from literature. Instead he hastens to remind us that we do not only want our lives to be valuable, we want them to have *meaning*; this, too, is a "dimension" of reality. "Value involves something's being integrated within its own boundaries," he says, "while meaning involves its having some connection beyond those boundaries." Presently it becomes clear that reality is more than just two-dimensional, for it also comprises *weight* and *importance*—don't we want our lives to have these? And surely we want them to have *depth*, for it is no good being shallow.

Before one knows it, reality has undergone an alarming exfoliation, sprouting no fewer

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than sixty "dimensions" (if I have counted correctly). The full list may be somewhat redundant, containing as it does such pairs as "depth" and "profundity," "novelty" and "originality," "infinitude" and "eternity," "wholeness" and "integration." Nozick does a bit of pruning somewhere along the way, for he ultimately manages to fit his dimensions into a 48-slot "polyhedron of reality." This thing is itself a 4 × 4 × 3 matrix organized according to three "categories of being." Reality, it turns out, is so rich that even its dimensions have dimensions.

Nozick's polyhedron of reality is in fact little more than a congeries of abstract words, a semantic slum through which one wants to go slashing with Occam's razor. Neither this elaborate construction nor the series of "reality principles" that accompany it—"Connect with actuality in a way that has some impact on it," "Become a vessel of light," that sort of thing—has much to offer someone who wishes to lead his life in a more reflective manner. Nozick himself voices the suspicion that there is a certain sterility to his theorizing, that life may be bigger than philosophy. "Don't the size, scope, and multifariousness of the major Russian novels, and of the body of Shakespeare's plays, show how inadequate any particular theory [of human existence] will have to be?" he asks, and his weary reader is inclined to agree.

Near the end of the book Nozick takes up the matter of politics. We learn that he has undergone a greening since his old libertarian days. The minimal state he plumped for in *Anarchy, State, and Utopia* now seems defective to him, since a "complete absence of any symbolic public expression and marking of caring and solidarity would leave the rest of us bereft of a society validating human relatedness." The state must not let us forget, after all, that we are "comrades in existing." Lest such barmy rhetoric lead one to think that Nozick lost all his hardheaded libertarian instincts, it should be noted that in passing he proposes a scheme whereby taxpayers could opt out of paying for government programs that they do not like.

Nozick would no doubt regard the potted and disobliging account I have given of his ideas as worse than useless. "Since wide-scale distortions get based upon secondary descriptions," he writes, "there is one precaution I can take: to ask that no reader summarize this book's contents or present slogans or catchwords from it. . . . The trickled-down philosophy is not worth following." I suppose the only responsible thing left to say, then, is that *The Examined Life* is not worth reading.

False Inevitabilities

REFLECTING ON THINGS PAST. *By Peter Lord Carrington. Harper & Row. $22.95.*

Reviewed by ELIE KEDOURIE

The sixth Lord Carrington, descended from a family of bankers and landowners who took some part in politics on the Whig and Liberal side, was born in 1919 and succeeded to the title in 1938. From Eton he joined the Grenadier Guards in which he served as an officer during the Second World War, participating in the campaign that followed the landing in Normandy in 1944 and (though he does not mention it in these memoirs) being awarded the Military Cross, a very high decoration given in the British army for bravery in the face of the enemy.

At the end of the war he left the army, having decided, as he tells us, to enter the life of politics. As a peer, of course, he sat, by right, in the House of Lords and began by taking part in the administration of agricultural affairs in Buckinghamshire where he had a country house and a one-thousand-acre farm. When the second Churchill administration took office in 1951, he was appointed a junior minister at the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries. In 1954 he transferred, in the same rank, to the Ministry of Defence. In 1956 he became United Kingdom High Commissioner in Australia—a country with which his family had many connections: a great-uncle, the third Lord Carrington, had been Governor of New South Wales and his grandfather had married an Australian heiress. Carrington remained in Canberra for three years. In 1959

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he returned to London when Harold MacMillan appointed him First Lord of the Admiralty. When Sir Alec Douglas Home succeeded MacMillan, Carrington joined the cabinet as Leader of the House of Lords, and he also acted as number two to R. A. Butler at the Foreign Office.

The Conservatives' defeat at the 1964 election did not arrest Carrington's ascent in the ranks of the Conservative party. When Edward Heath succeeded Douglas Home as Leader of the Party, Carrington became Leader of the Opposition in the House of Lords. He had clearly by now become an influential not to say a powerful Conservative figure. As Minister of Defence, he was a key member of the Heath administration of 1970–74. Indicative of his stature was the fact that he served as chairman of the Conservative party from 1972 to 1974.

When Heath lost out to Harold Wilson in 1974, his leadership of the Conservatives came into question. Carrington himself made no secret of his support for Heath, but when the Party chose Mrs. Thatcher in 1975, she asked Carrington to lead the Opposition in the Lords, and he thus continued to be a principal figure in the Party. After Mrs. Thatcher's victory in 1979 she chose him as Foreign Secretary. He remained in this post until the Argentine invasion of the Falkland Islands in April 1982, when duty to the country and to the administration made it necessary, in his estimation, that he should resign. In 1984 he succeeded Joseph Luns as secretary general of NATO. At the end of his term in this office he became chairman of Christie's, the auctioneers.

The picture that emerges from the memoirs is of one who has been blessed with native abilities and with inherited wealth and position, and who has wanted to put these advantages to use for the public good. In the course of discussing the frame of mind of the men he commanded in the war, he remarks that it is the duty of those who have enjoyed superior luck, and sometimes also superior qualities, to feel concern and understanding for the difficulties of those less fortunate. His good nature also appears from a passing remark to the effect that he finds it much more natural to like than dislike people he works with or for.

To these qualities may be added the moderate and empirical cast of mind with which

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he has approached public affairs. Discussing contentious issues in defense policy, Carrington says that he is not the kind of person who enjoys "speculative and intellectual gyration for its own sake." He respects logic but has a certain regard for intuitive judgment. In any matter under dispute, there is bound to be more than one point of view, each or all of which are defensible: a decision between contending points of view "is a matter of balancing factors and selecting a sensible way."

Carrington's dislike of what he would consider to be doctrinaire positions in politics comes out in his remarks about Heath's economic policy. As is well known, Heath, while Leader of the Opposition, had identified himself and the Party with a statement, issued following a meeting at the Selsdon Park Hotel, which was "a fairly assertive restatement of the virtues of capitalism and the benefits of free enterprise" as contrasted with the creeping socialism "we had, it was suggested, suffered in recent years under Governments both Labour and Conservative." But though Heath identified the Party with this viewpoint, he was not, Carrington declares, particularly dogmatic about any of this: his attitude to economic matters was "essentially empirical." So that when he came to power, Heath, finding that unemployment was rising, adopted a "reflationary" policy that drew charges of a loss of nerve and of executing an abrupt U-turn. Carrington approved of Heath's change of policy on the ground precisely that present unhappiness arising out of unemployment should be balanced against the future ill effects of inflation. The government chose to relieve, as it thought, present unhappiness and let inflation take care of itself. The upshot was that it lost control of economic policy, did not relieve unemployment, unleashed inflation, and speedily came a cropper. The episode is instructive in showing the limits of simple empiricism in politics: it is by no means an infallible rule by which to navigate treacherous eddies or to avoid shipwreck.

The Falklands affair is very much a case in point. The problem had arisen long before Carrington became Foreign Secretary. He inherited this complicated and intractable issue in which a small number of islanders of British descent were adamantly opposed to being annexed by Argentina, and Argentina was adamantly opposed to any solution that would not establish full and absolute recognition of its sovereignty over the islands. The issue had festered in the seventies, and shortly after taking office Carrington persuaded the Prime Minister and his colleagues to send Nicholas Ridley, a junior minister at the Foreign Office, to see what could be done with the Argentines. Following his report on returning from the area, Carrington told his colleagues that there were three alternatives: first to refuse any negotiation or concession, second to negotiate about secondary issues while refusing to discuss sovereignty, or third to be prepared to negotiate about sovereignty, with the proviso that the islanders' consent to any change had to be obtained.

Carrington rightly believed that British policy was under severe constraints, financial and naval, and that the first option was therefore unreal. What he preferred was to negotiate on sovereignty and come to some agreement with the Argentines whereby they would be formally sovereign, but would lease back the islands to Britain for a period of, say, a hundred years. But he found that his colleagues, the House of Commons, and the islanders were all opposed to any such arrangement:

> I thought [he writes] that this reaction took too little account of the adverse consequences of the alternatives, and I decided that my best course was to keep on trying, thinking, and, as I believed, educating. The case for leaseback might prove more persuasive over time; and meanwhile it would be important to keep some sort of negotiations going with Argentina of a fairly meaningless kind, perhaps, but time, again, might adjust that.

It was an eminently rational and sensible decision, if one didn't have to reckon with the volatility and unpredictability of the military junta in Buenos Aires. The crunch, then, came suddenly and with terrifying rapidity in March 1982. Carrington writes that he has subsequently asked himself whether disaster could have been averted by the dispatch of a substantial naval force, "but as we didn't know for certain there was going to be an invasion, we reckoned that such a deployment might actually precipitate matters" and believed that such a deployment could not, in any case, be maintained indefinitely. Carrington, therefore, decided to disregard, when

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he was told of it on March 5, 1982, the precedent of the Labour government which had sent in 1977 a submarine as a deterrent to hostile Argentine movements. He asked his officials whether the Argentines had known of this deployment, and when told they had not, he did not pursue the matter. He was asked about this by the Committee of Privy Councillors who investigated the circumstances preceding the Argentine invasion. He said that although the situation had become more difficult, he did not believe that the prospect of continuing negotiations at that time was hopeless. The possibility of keeping negotiations going, which was his objective, might have been jeopardized if the sending of ships became known.

There is, of course, no knowing whether a naval deployment would have deterred the Argentines. They did not believe that Britain would fight, and they could not bring themselves to take seriously a woman Prime Minister who had been in office only since May 1979, and who had not yet had occasion to show of what metal she was made. As it happens, at about the same time as Carrington dismissed the idea of sending to the South Atlantic a nuclear submarine as a deterrent, the Prime Minister wrote on a telegram from Buenos Aires reporting rumors about the possible use of force by the Junta: "We must make contingency plans." Her private secretary drew the attention of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and of the Ministry of Defence to her annotation, but this evoked neither action nor reaction.

Carrington's handling of the Falklands affair was fully consonant with his conviction "that the aim of diplomacy is to make friends, advance peace and commerce, and influence people; and that is the way to promote British interests." The objectives are benevolent and beneficent, except that sometimes a wicked world makes them impossible of attainment, and then one may have to have contingency plans, and if need be, to fight. Carrington the soldier who had won the Military Cross would surely know this, but the reader does not receive the impression that such knowledge has become incorporated into his outlook on foreign affairs.

His comments on the Suez affair of 1956, when he was High Commissioner in Australia, would seem to bear this out. He thought the military expedition "injudicious," and the advantages of toppling Nasser hard to perceive. He admits that this is wisdom after the event. There is nothing to object to in wisdom acquired from the event, but the wisdom here seems based on a belief in the inevitability of "the Arab people's struggle for independence and thereby more self-respect," and that British influence with the Arabs would be destroyed by an expedition against Nasser—regardless of its outcome—because "it could be described as an Imperialist attack on legitimate Arab aspirations." These judgments are noteworthy in more than one respect. Carrington seems to take it for granted that Arab independence and self-respect were bound up with Nasser's fortunes, when in fact he was feared and hated by most Arab rulers—particularly those friendly to Great Britain; that there was something inevitable about his rise to hegemony; and that British influence among the Arabs declined because of the Suez expedition, and not because of its failure. The conclusion from all this was that it was not worth resisting Nasser. These judgments, made by the thirty-seven-year-old High Commissioner in Canberra seem to cohere with those of the much more experienced sixty-three-year-old Secretary of State who had to grapple with a crisis in a remote outpost of an almost vanished empire.

In Australia, Carrington writes, one thing was borne in on him:

> The fact that we in Britain are a West European nation. Distance, geography and a history which reaches back through centuries of shared European experience are realities not sentimental abstractions. Despite the affection I had found for Australia, I realized in a more positive way than hitherto that I was and am a European.

That Britain is now part of the European Economic Community is an accomplished fact, brought about by the Heath administration of which Carrington was a prominent member. This may have been inescapable—who knows? But Carrington's European credo is not, for all that, other than astonishing. Nobody can deny, of course, that Britain is in proximity to the continent of Europe, but surely its world-wide naval power, its particular connection with North America, Australia, New Zealand, and South Africa, its Indian empire—all these have made Britain so much

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more than a merely European nation. Carrington's view of Britain as a "West European nation" is disconcerting—and, in spite of the present prominence of EEC affairs in British politics, eccentric?

There is another thing: Britain has thrown in her lot with the states of Europe in a manner inconceivable between, say, the battle of Plassy and adherence to the Treaty of Rome in 1972. What this means is that Britain with the longstanding stability of its institutions, and the peaceable and constitutional character of its politics, is now involved with a collection of states whose politics, ever since the French revolutionary Terror, have been turbulent, disagreeable, unstable, violent, and at times horrific beyond the bounds of imagination. It may be that there was no helping membership of the EEC, and one may hope never to see again on the Continent the likes of Robespierre, Napoléon, Mussolini, Hitler, and others. But Britain a West European nation and nothing else—when one knows that any day it is infinitely easier to feel at home with Australians and New Zealanders, than with Germans and Frenchmen?

In spite of their protests in opposition, the members of the Heath administration seem to have accepted much of Labour's defense policies, and Carrington seems to have thought that this was all to the good. Britain's role outside the NATO area would now be to offer training, weapons, and advice:

> It might be less exciting than the ability to launch expeditions beyond palm and pine but it could be more self-financing; and it didn't require carrier-borne air support! On the whole we accepted this, accepted that we must concentrate our defence on preserving our own homeland and contributing whatever we decided to an essentially self-defensive Alliance. Defence had come full circle. It was not only to start but almost to end at home.

The argument is seemingly clear and persuasive, but in reality question-begging, for the task of "preserving our own homeland" could not, in the circumstances of Britain, start and end at home. Self-preservation required NATO as a shield, and for NATO to remain a shield it had to prevent the potential enemy not only from succeeding in a frontal attack in Europe, but also from turning its flank in Turkey and the Middle East. Could so-called out-of-theater responsibilities be left wholly to the United States? Carrington's formulation above elides this question, but it does throw some light on the mind-set with which the challenge of the Falkland Islands was approached: defense not only to start but almost to end at home.

When Carrington became Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary, the first important issue he had to deal with was Rhodesia. Ian Smith had unilaterally declared the independence of Rhodesia, and the Wilson administration had retaliated by promoting mandatory sanctions against a territory now formally in rebellion against the Crown. Smith had subsequently come to an agreement with a black leader, Bishop Abel Muzorewa, over a new constitution that gave blacks some representation and ministerial portfolios but safeguarded the position of the whites. Elections had been held under the new constitution which an envoy of Mrs. Thatcher's, then still Leader of the Opposition, had judged to be full and fair. Mrs. Thatcher herself and the bulk of the Conservative party seemed to be in favor of the new dispensation, and it was generally expected, when Mrs. Thatcher became Prime Minister, that sanctions would be lifted and the new regime legitimized by the Crown.

This did not happen, because the so-called frontline states together with the leaders of the black guerrillas operating in Rhodesia, Nkomo and Mugabe, had set their faces against it. Carrington believed that it would be a mistake for Britain to recognize the Muzorewa-Smith regime, and he was successful in persuading Mrs. Thatcher of his views. When he was in opposition Carrington became convinced, during travels in Africa, that Nkomo and Mugabe were representative of large numbers of black Rhodesians. He believed that "majority rule, acknowledged as such by the world, had to come." Here too, as with Nasser, there was a kind of inevitability to which one had to bow. And bow he did, at the Lancaster House Conference of 1979, when the Muzorewa-Smith settlement was undone, and machinery was put in motion that was to make Mugabe sole ruler of Zimbabwe. On the way, there was, he declared in the House of Lords, "large-scale intimidation of the rural population," with the activities of Mugabe's followers leading to "considerable revulsion" even among British civil servants;

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there was "a corrupt result" and "a betrayed kith and kin." But Carrington, though unhappy, was "unrepentant." What profit, however, showed in the balance sheet from this manufacture of the inevitable still remains obscure. Rhodesia, he says, was an irritant; it soured relations with other states. Happy the government that can purchase permanent relief from irritants at so low a price.

Rhodesian problems notwithstanding, Carrington came to the Foreign Office with the belief that the most important problem facing the world was that of the Middle East. He had always regarded the Middle East as "one of the prime danger points of the world," liable to give rise to a confrontation similar to the catastrophic one of 1914. The Middle East is, of course, a very unstable area full of conflicts, open and latent. But if one or both superpowers are intent on an activist course, heaven knows that there are enough flash points the world over to trigger a confrontation. By the Middle East problem, Carrington meant the Arab-Israeli conflict. This conflict, however, has lasted now a very long time, sometimes quiescent and sometimes active. Its dimensions and modalities are well known and familiar, its very familiarity perversely providing the kind of security that the wonted and the habitual supply. Who says that if this conflict were settled, this would not itself conjure up more dangerous and frightening conflicts? In any case, a country now being steered into becoming no more than a component of the EEC, with its defense starting and ending at home—did such a country have the power and influence to press or push the Israelis or their enemies into a settlement? Neither before, nor during, nor after Carrington's tenure at the Foreign Office did this prove to be the case.

Carrington came into office with yet other ideas about the Arab-Israeli conflict. While in opposition he had visited the area and met many Palestinian exiles, among whom "a very rich and very charming man" whose family "had lived in Jaffa since the second century AD: they had introduced the oranges"! But now, for this exile, "over seventeen hundred years of continuity had been broken." He came back with the view that here was an intractable problem which the Arabs had to shoulder, but which they themselves did not create: "I formed and retained the view that

THE UNCOMMON MAN

In each of us there is something of "the uncommon man." In a sense there is no such thing as "the common man," a term used by politicians to designate an imaginary group of identical nonentities.

But present-day science and technology and a Federal government that is at once overbearing and over-solicitous have between them subjected the society to markedly dehumanizing influences, and are progressively undermining, in each one of us, our uniqueness as individuals, our spirit of independence, our initiative, and whatever capacity for excellence we may have in us. In addition they have caused many of us to become oblivious to certain vital, fundamental distinctions—between merit and mediocrity, the spiritual and the materialistic, beauty and ugliness—even between good and evil. The question presents itself: Can anything be done about this societal disease, or is it terminal? In the opinion of the author the prognosis is not propitious.

A Sociological Study by Coman Leavenworth

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the Palestinians had not only a case but a strong case." This was of course true, so far as it went; but who says case must also say counter-case; and who says case and counter-case must imply a court that renders judgment according to the evidence. States, however, are not a court of law. If they come down on one side of a conflict rather than on the other, it must be that their interest is in espousing the cause of one side or of the other—however meritorious, or the opposite, it might be.

As in Nasser's case, or Rhodesia's, here too Carrington saw inevitabilities. Nasser represented the Arabs, Mugabe and Nkomo the blacks of Rhodesia; the PLO likewise "represented the majority of Palestinians. They could not be ignored. If there were ever to be any sort of productive negotiation it must include them." But, surely, in none of these cases can one speak of representation: no one elected Nasser before he became sole ruler and could then be elected to his fill, and similarly with Mugabe and Nkomo, as with the PLO. What may be said is that their violent actions and their rhetoric have elicited at times popular enthusiasm, because they seem to give expression to various discontents, and by so doing to exacerbate situations and encourage militancy. Of course there is no problem if one wishes to give Nasser or Mugabe what they want, and what happens thereafter will be somebody else's funeral. But it becomes much more difficult to do so in the case of the Arab-Israeli conflict. The parties are numerous, their rivalries are deep-seated and endemic, and their aims changeable and irreconcilable. And of these parties the PLO is least powerful, and most fissiparous. A policy such as that of the EEC Venice Declaration of 1980 which pressed for negotiations between Israel and the PLO so as to establish a Palestinian state and which Carrington favored was unlikely to succeed.

Carrington concludes his account of his tenure at the Foreign Office with a heartfelt encomium for its officials, their expertise, ability, and devotion. We may not doubt that his words are sincerely meant, and not simply formal civilities. For what one senses from his own account, as well as from observing the tendencies of British foreign policy before and after him, is that there was a kind of symbiosis between the Minister and his officials. Carrington's memoirs thus tell us not only how he himself viewed matters, but in what perspective those in charge of managing British foreign policy look upon their country and its place in the world.

Fahrenheit 1990

THE WAR AGAINST THE INTELLECT: EPISODES IN THE DECLINE OF DISCOURSE. *By Peter Shaw. University of Iowa Press. $22. Paper, $10.95.*

Reviewed by CHRISTOPHER CLAUSEN

In the science-fiction movie *Fahrenheit 451*, the possession of books is the most heinous of all crimes against society and the state. Books give people ideas. Ideas introduce the possibility of disagreement, dissatisfaction, even inequality in people's ability to grasp and manipulate them. Far better for an egalitarian state to maintain a cozy sense of community by feeding its population a steady, undemanding diet of television entertainments. The idea in its outlines is as old as Plato, but the film carries it to its practical conclusion—a national fire department whose purpose is to root out hidden volumes, burn them, and see that their elitist owners get appropriately punished.

Not altogether different from this scenario of the future is Peter Shaw's view of intellectual life in America today—particularly life in the universities, and most particularly in the humanities and social sciences. The problem is not so much a disapproval of books as such as a pervasive hostility toward logic, reason, evidence—the normal criteria for evaluating books or ideas—when they happen to conflict with (mostly left-wing) academic political ideology. Thus it has become, Mr. Shaw argues in this collection of essays, a sufficient criticism of an idea, book, or writer to describe it or him as "racist," "sexist," "elitist" (a Marxist objurgation that somehow crept into the general vocabulary), or—gravest sin of all—"ethnocentric." This last, rather technical polysyllable may seem implausible as a term of

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partisan abuse, but it has lately begun to show up with that sense in undergraduate term papers, a sure sign of its progress in the world. It is, as those familiar with academic and quasi-academic discourse today will immediately recognize, applied only to white European or American writers.

Like many other commentators, Mr. Shaw traces this state of affairs back to the 1960s.

> Starting in the 1960s a change came over the rules of discourse whereby the marshaling of logic and evidence gradually lost its prestige. In its place right feeling and good intentions came to reign as the highest intellectual values and the persuasive earnests of high seriousness. . . . It was first asserted by a few and eventually accepted by many that the capacity to reason on a subject was less valuable than the bringing to bear of one's political convictions, one's gender experience, or one's social status (or, rather, an attitude toward social status).
>
> A virtually automatic suspension of the rules of proof, reason, and logic was now accorded to certain privileged kinds of discourse: the championing of artistic works by those newly designated as minorities or the oppressed; accusations of Western historical guilt towards the working class, minorities, or the Third World; assaults on established reputations or the elevation of obscure ones.

Although at this late date it may well be futile, I should like to enter a caveat to the almost universal employment—whether nostalgic or, in Mr. Shaw's case, disapproving—of "the 1960s" as a unitary concept. The most accurate thing to say about the 1960s is that there were ten of them, all different, and a lot of different things happened while they were going on. Usually "the sixties" is intended to conjure up an image of violent Dionysianism that merges Woodstock and anti-war protests, LSD and Janis Joplin. All of these were features of the sixties; but then so were the Bay of Pigs and the moon landing, *A Man for All Seasons* and *Fahrenheit 451*, and Martin Luther King, Jr.

Nonetheless, many of the trends of which Mr. Shaw rightly complains are measurably derived from, or first became prominent in, events of the late 1960s. I thought at the time and still think that the civil rights movement and protest against the Vietnam War were good causes, but there is no doubt that much of the intolerance, confrontationalism, self-righteousness, and imperviousness to evidence of the contemporary Left derive from the experience of these movements. So do the versions of them in contemporary politicized scholarship, in idealizations of the so-called Third World and anyone who claims ties with it, in radical feminist criticism (on which Mr. Shaw has a particularly good chapter), as well as in the movement for "diversity" (meaning demographically based faculties and curricula) that recently sprang up in many universities.

The substantial defeat of the student Left by the early 1970s had two large consequences, not only in the United States but in Britain and France as well. First, it ceased in most of its manifestations to be a political movement in the larger society and became an academic one. Second, it cut its remaining ties with liberalism and became largely Marxist. Marxism, despite its declining status in the rest of the world, proved effective in academic politics and careers. The Duke University English department with its famously high salaries may be the most visible sign that Marxism pays, academically speaking, but it is hardly the only sign. "In literary theory circles," Mr. Shaw quotes William E. Cain as reporting with approval, "Marxism has acquired a special status and is now the predominant subject and system of belief in debates about the politics of interpretation. No one dares to utter a liberal doctrine." Of course the majority of literary critics are no more Marxists, neo or otherwise, than the majority of academics in other disciplines. The book argues, however, that on crucial issues (such as whether the literary "canon" constitutes ruling-class oppression), a vaguely liberal majority allows itself to be morally intimidated by the radical minority. It is easy to find examples of such successful intimidation in most major universities today.

Mr. Shaw does not ask the interesting question of how a political ideology so discredited by history, so remote from any real politics in its own society, manages to maintain itself as a going academic concern. How can a movement that professes to believe so strongly in the people keep up its spirits, let alone its numbers, when the people outside the university—and now, triumphantly, in Eastern Europe—seize every opportunity to reject nearly everything the movement stands for? The answer is, it does so with a lot of strain. The Marxism of English and sociology depart-

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ments is a strangely hermetic set of doctrines, some of which would dismay the Founder. One can hardly imagine Fredric Jameson of Duke or Terry Eagleton of Oxford organizing the local tobacco or auto workers for revolution; it would be a sight worth seeing if they tried. Instead, university radicals for the most part practice elaborate strategies of denial. The people are not hostile to revolution; only the white elite and its stooges are. (Never mind that nearly all academic Marxists are members of this same elite.) "The people," in fact, have pretty much ceased to be white at all in the last twenty years, since the only way of belonging to that once inclusive category now is to be a putative victim of oppression—non-white, homosexual, or at the very least female.

The Marxism of Marx and Lenin had its slippery joints, but it was not a doctrine of subjectivism. It held that some things were true (the existence of class struggle) and some things were false (the existence of God). Ideologies were historically relative, but above ideologies was science, which, properly employed, could be relied upon for knowledge. But when a man finds that reason is against him, he will soon turn against reason. The falsification by history of Marx's most salient prophecies, together with the horrendous record of Marxist regimes in the world, has forced many academic Marxists into a radical subjectivism that allows the denial of inconvenient facts by denying the reality of fact itself, or of truth. As Mr. Shaw says of contemporary literary criticism, "Certainty and piety of all kinds are systematically undermined in favor of a universal relativism of values and judgment. . . . In the end, from this point of view nothing makes any sense; everything is relative, anyway; one person's opinion is as good as another's; moral distinctions are useless. They all reduce to power and desire. . . ." Troubling facts are whisked away with a stroke of intellectual detergent, and everybody is equal by definition.

So why bother having a revolution? "Having abandoned a reliable definition of reality," as Mr. Shaw points out, "those who wish to change the present organization of society have left themselves with no ground to stand on. They are as doomed to inconsequence as their predecessors of the 1960s were with their politics of symbolic protest in the streets." In fact some 1960s street protests had favorable consequences; but then the protestors believed in the possibility of describing real grievances in a way that could convince a large public. But if grievances are as subjective as anything else, any such possibility is an illusion. The consequences of thoroughgoing subjectivism are far from revolutionary, a fact that the more rigorous academic Marxists have belatedly discovered. Partly for this reason, deconstruction, not long ago the favorite theory in departments of literature, is perceptibly fading. Less consistent forms of subjectivism, however, seem destined to remain in favor (indeed, to remain unquestionable dogmas) until the needs that made them attractive in the first place cease to be felt in universities.

I have been dwelling on literary criticism because it is the field I know best, but Mr. Shaw also has chapters on the current state of history as a discipline, plagiarism, and—appropriately enough—"The Dark Age of the Humanities." Perhaps his least successful chapter is about anthropology. Taking up such targets as evolution, the big bang theory, talking apes, and the sentimentalization of primitive people, he devotes too little space to any of them and comes off sounding uncharacteristically curmudgeonly. A more serious limitation of the book as a whole, for some readers, will be the quietism and pessimism of its last chapters. We are, Mr. Shaw states, in a dark age, and he certainly quotes a depressing number of revelers in darkness to support his point. Surprisingly, in a book that calls on its readers to "reaffirm the standards of discourse, and to rise to their defense no matter under what aegis they are put in peril," he rarely quotes any contemporary who agrees with him on the subjects he writes about. Perhaps there are more such people around than he suspects.

Mr. Shaw's pessimism leads him to propose only a "minimal rather than the usual maximal case for the humanities," which is that "our predecessors thought and expressed some things in ways that cannot be improved on." I entirely agree, but the principle as stated has at least two problems. First, it seems to apply best to philosophy, less well to imaginative literature, and least of all to history. Second, even as applied to great thinkers such as Plato or Kant, it asserts precisely what extreme

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historical relativists (not to mention subjectivist egalitarians) deny. In order to persuade, it needs to be stated in a more detailed form, with a greater variety of examples; above all it needs to be framed for an audience that the author believes he can persuade. My guess is that Peter Shaw does not believe, for the moment, in any such large or influential audience.

My own view is that while we live in an age with many dark features, there are more candles about than you might guess, and further that while the true humanist is (among other things) the "curator of values" that Mr. Shaw advises him to be, he need not merely sit in his museum waiting for the occasional lost traveler to wander by. Real values are more active than that, and have more power to attract. In short, I do not think that the battle against the book-burning firemen is quite as hopeless as Mr. Shaw's book seems to argue. That does not mean it isn't a battle at all, though, or that the deserters (liberal and conservative) should not be shamed back into action by books like this one. Peter Shaw's style, wit, and above all learning in a diversity of fields make *The War Against the Intellect*, despite its somberness, a pleasure to read.

For Interpretation

THE PLEASURES OF READING IN AN IDEOLOGICAL AGE. *By Robert Alter. Simon & Schuster. $18.95. Paper, $8.95.*

Reviewed by EMERSON R. MARKS

In the preface to one of his earlier books, *The Art of Biblical Narrative*, Professor Robert Alter stated his belief that "it is possible to discuss literary matters in language understandable to all educated people." We may reflect that for a few such matters, issues of

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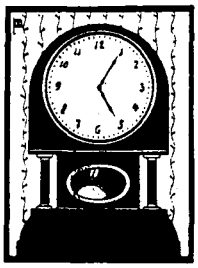
Keeping Time
Memory, Nostalgia, and the Art of History
Peter N. Carroll



At once memoir and meditation, *Keeping Time* records one professional historian's struggle to live in history even as he studies it, writes about it, and teaches it. Using his own life as a case study, Peter Carroll strives to locate himself and the people he has known in their respective historical times and places.

"Not only an entertaining book, engagingly written, but a valuable document for understanding the nature of history as seen through the eyes of those young practitioners who become our professional historians"—Carl N. Degler, Stanford University. $24.95

Exemplary Elders
David Levin

With clear-eyed fondness, a noted scholar pays tribute here to eight men and women who touched his life and helped shape his own quest for self-definition. David Levin's "exemplary elders" range from eminent teachers and writers like Samuel Eliot Morison and Wallace Stegner to Sarah K. Marker, his wife's aunt, who was barely known outside the small town in which she ran a confectionery.

"These luminous and utterly absorbing portraits reveal much about such elusive human qualities as character, temperament, creativity, and the troubled soul"—Michael Kammen, Cornell University. $19.95

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abstruse theory, the required education must be fairly advanced or even specialized. That demurrer aside, the little volume under review is a splendid vindication of its author's faith. Despite its unpretentious title, *The Pleasures of Reading in an Ideological Age* is anything but a celebration of naive abandon to literary entertainment as against the supposedly joyless pursuits of critical analysis. Alter's book is itself criticism, theoretical and applied, of the finest order. It differs from similar studies in that his topics and terms are selected to enhance a reader's capacity for rational enjoyment. He aims to show how much that enjoyment depends on the rich texture of conventions, formal and structural patterns, and stylistic resources that generate the "higher exponential power" of literary language and thus distinguish the pleasure it affords from other kinds of intellectual gratification.

There is nothing essentially new here in theory. To achieve his purpose Alter had only to restate the most perdurable ideas of Western literary thought. He has done so with admirable lucidity, precision, and an authority conferred by a rare sensitivity to literature. Four "core" chapters treat successively style, allusion, structure, and the narrative technique which Henry James called "point of view" but which Alter elaborates with a subtlety that justifies his preference for the label "perspective." In each case there is a description of the term, disentangling its various meanings (now disjunct, now overlapping), along with deft illustrative explications of passages from writers familiar to culturally literate readers.

Interestingly, the conception of literary structure underlying Alter's definitions and explicative procedure is essentially organistic. To be sure, he is at pains to distance himself from the Romantic "mystifications of 'organic form' " and the reductiveness of the biological analogy. He adopts instead the equally awkward analogy with a machine, because that implies a constructor. Yet the holism to which organicism gave rise, and which remains in much modern theory, pervades his discussion. It shows in his grasp of the inseparability of form and thought and of the dynamic tension among conflicting elements in imaginative creations. "The ultimate paradox of literature," he writes,

> is that it is at once centripetal and centrifugal. In a great many works of literature it seems as though everything is powerfully pulled toward an imaginative center. One token of that pull is what I called earlier the mnemonic force of the literary text: things are not forgotten as we read, even if their effect is subliminal—a phrase, a key word, a rhetorical pattern, an image, a fictional gesture or event interlaces with all that resembles it at other points in the text, generating an order of cohesion not encountered in extraliterary language.

In overall conception this is pure Coleridge, who first in English criticism employed the terms *centripetal* and *centrifugal* (almost certainly borrowed from Friedrich Schelling) to describe it. Of course in thinking about literature none of us can ever entirely still powerful voices from the past. What is reassuring is that the whole tenor of Alter's argument shows his coincidence with traditional ideas to have been largely personal rediscoveries, not mere adaptations.

Appropriately, the occasion for Alter's book is the almost total break with tradition by the academic theorizers who followed in the wake of French structuralism: Derridean deconstructors and the neo-Marxist, neo-Freudian, and feminist ideologues now predominant in university classrooms and critical journals. Although after the first chapter Alter spends very little time attacking these innovators, he confesses to an "oppositional impulse" to protest the near destruction of good reading resulting from their hegemony on the critical scene.

In effect, his whole book bears eloquent witness for the opposition. By its clarity of expression alone, a refreshing contrast to the jargon-clogged involutions of so much academic prose, but above all by certain assumptions explicit or implied, this work stands in stark contradiction to the currently fashionable modes of conducting the critical enterprise. Alter subscribes to three principles that, though occasionally controverted, have long been staples of sound theory. One is the uniqueness of artistic literature, setting fictive writing apart from historiography, philosophy, and every other verbal discipline or form. Though by virtue of a shared lexical medium all writing communicates, imaginative literature conveys "messages of a different order," the greatest literature effecting a linguistic ordonnance transcending that of ordinary language.

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The second principle, in some accounts either indentical with or a condition of the first, is that literature shares with the other arts an aesthetic character and value. It pleases us, Alter finds, by turning ordinary communicative language into "a satisfying aesthetic object." He notes that the phrasal pairs and triads of Samuel Johnson's prose "constitute an aesthetic object" and invites us to savor the "aesthetically pleasing patterns" of multiplied and destabilized meanings of words in *King Lear* and to sense the "lovely tension" between structure and openness. He even, in several places in this book, dares to revive the neglected term *beauty*. And so on throughout, in a manner sure to arouse the scorn of the textual dissectors for its unabashed defiance of a critical idiom emasculated by "emotional alienation from the imaginative life of the text under discussion."

The third principle holds that by their mimetic mode of existence novels, poems, and plays refer to every aspect of extraliterary reality known to human experience; and that via this referential link they are inevitably freighted with moral and cognitive import. To deny this, Alter argues, to entrap literature's referential function within the net of "intertextual" relations so dwelt upon by post-structuralists, is to foreclose any significant explanation of the powerful emotive appeal and exemplary value of great fictional characters. Far from the sham or impossibility some critical schools have called it, mimesis "answers a deep human need and provides profound and abiding delight in itself."

Alter's dissenting position is further underscored by his rejection of three notions that figure as prime weapons in the iconoclastic arsenal: the total indeterminacy of interpretation, the myth of the exclusively ideological basis of literary taste and judgment, and the dogma that no piece of writing is more valuable than any other. The first, often expressed and as often exploded, is a transparent reductio ad absurdum of disagreement among reasoned interpretations of a given work, by the cracked logic that therefore none is immune to rational refutation. *Hamlet* was intended as a warning against study at Wittenberg, if anyone says so. The second flies in the face of so much personal and historical evidence against it that it must simply be taken on faith—the faith of a neo-Marxist. The third, whose adherents profess to find no reason to value *King*

An American Original...

THE PHILOSOPHY OF JOHN WILLIAM MILLER

Edited by Joseph P. Fell

These essays examine the work of the American philosopher John William Miller, who taught at Williams College from 1924-60. Miller's Historical Idealism, whose central notion of "the midworld" sought to resolve the ontological and epistemological dualisms that have plagued modern thought, has aroused increasing attention since the publication of five volumes of his work by W. W. Norton & Co. (1978-83).

Contributors: George P. Brockway, Vincent Colapietro, Robert S. Corrington, James A. Diefenbeck, Robert H. Elias, Joseph P. Fell, Robert E. Gahringer, Henry W. Johnstone, Jr., Gary Stahl, Cushing Strout, Stephen Tyman

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Lear or *War and Peace* above *Lays of Ancient Rome* or even the tawdriest pornographic novel, marks the spread into literary studies of the virus of anti-elitist egalitarianism cultured during the 1960s.

Alter's opposition to these ideas, it cannot be overstressed, has nothing to do with the reactionary blindness that spurns every fresh initiative since the New Criticism. He gladly recognizes that the history of literary thought includes its periodic revitalization by new concepts borrowed from other disciplines. He prizes the very thinkers from whom the ideologues take their departures. From such as Marx, Freud, Saussure, and Lévi-Strauss, he writes, have come a wealth of new questions to ask of literary texts and new modes of exploring them.

The governing strategy of Alter's book, a recourse to reader experience, is certainly the most effective he could have chosen to expose what he deplores in critical practice. Warnings against the affective fallacy notwithstanding, all literary theory must stand or fall at last by the test of conformity to what occurs in the consciousness of lovers of books when they read them, irrespective of the part played in that experience by cultural conditioning. On that rock all flawed theory has sooner or later split, the final collapse of the dramatic unities being an egregious case in point. This is the central import of Johnson's observation that "there is always an appeal open from criticism to nature," which Alter might well have used as epigraph, especially since he ranks the *Preface to Shakespeare*, where it occurs, among "the glories of English criticism."

Some readers, less circumspect than Alter in assessing the present state of affairs, may wonder whether Johnson's salutary appeal will always be made by those likely to influence general opinion. Fears are common of late that a whole generation may soon be indoctrinated against it. Alter himself suspects that undergraduates in our leading institutions may have read two or three pages of Lacan or Derrida for every one of George Eliot or Stendhal. And from their ranks must come our future teachers of literature. A century ago Matthew Arnold, confronting a different order of threat to the currency of good literature, could entrust its continuance to humanity's instinct for self-preservation. Today, after the mass brutalities unleashed by the political ideologies of our own century, we are less sure of the beneficence of human instincts.

Yet the very existence of Alter's book is cause for rejecting the counsels of despair. In that, too, he is supported by literary history, in one instance by a reliance on that same "experience of reading which guides this entire study." In 1693 the prestigious Thomas Rymer published a savage attack on Shakespeare that many thought the quietus of the playwright's reputation. But John Dryden, reluctantly conceding the intellectual dexterity and erudition of the eminent critic, could still ask, "Who will read Mr. Rymer or not read Shakespeare?" The question stands.

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AUTHOR'S QUERY

For a catalogue raisonne of the paintings and drawings by Marsden Hartley, I would appreciate hearing from anyone not previously contacted who owns or knows of paintings or drawings by the artist. I am also interested in the unpublished letters, essays, and poems.

Gail Levin
c/o Salander-O'Reilly Galleries
22 East 80th Street
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The Reader Replies

Who Read John Locke?

In a thoroughly polemical article "Who Read John Locke? Words and Acts in the American Revolution" (Autumn 1989), historians Oscar and Lilian Handlin begin by severely castigating some of their distinguished colleagues for exaggerating the influence of ideas on actual events and end by flatly denying the "determinative influence" of Locke in particular on the ideology of the American Revolution. For lack of space, the following discussion will deal mainly with certain insufficiently appreciated aspects of Locke's intellectual impact on Thomas Jefferson, as reflected especially in the Declaration of Independence.

1. The article's authors are doubtless right in criticizing the Carl Beckers for overestimating Locke's intellectual influence, above all, on the Declaration, but they are wrong in underestimating that influence. As usual, the two extremes coincide in deviating from the actual truth.

2. The Handlins do not venture to characterize the ideology of the American Revolution. Yet, at the risk of oversimplification, it may be succinctly characterized as the way of thinking expressive of the ideals of a free society in late eighteenth-century America. Its Jeffersonian version is epitomized in the Declaration's militant assertion of men's natural rights to "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness." Strangely enough, these rallying words are conspicuous by their absence in the article under consideration. Whence their source and counterpart in Locke?

3. In *A Letter Concerning Toleration* (1689), a polemical work studied by Jefferson and written in defense of the separation of church and state, Locke defines true government as one whose function is to attend solely to the civil interests of society, namely: "life, liberty, health, and indolency of body; and the possession of outward things, such as money, lands, houses, furniture, and the like." The revealing Lockean passage is often found shortened to life, liberty, and property. Consciously or unconsciously, Jefferson refined the term "property" by calling it euphemistically "the pursuit of happiness." Incidentally, in *Two Treatises of Government* (1690) Locke restates his functional definition in terms of "Lives, Liberties and Estates."

4. The authors do well in reminding us that Jefferson was critical of Locke's qualified view of religious toleration in the *Letter*. But, even so, the motive of their reminder is more to discredit Locke for setting limits to religious toleration than to credit him for prodding Jefferson to think otherwise. In any event, Locke's influence here on a vital religio-political subject, however negative, is important all the same in that it served as an intellectual stimulus for the making of Jefferson's own mind.

5. The article's target is the standard view on the significant part played by Locke's *Two Treatises* in the justification of the rebellion in British America. In fact, its authors say that his reputation in the American colonies rested not on his *Two Treatises* but rather on *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (1690). Now, apart from the problem raised of Locke's reputation, they say so only in passing, thereby missing the crucial connection of his *Essay* with the Declaration of Independence. In order to see the connection, we must remember that the Declaration as a product of the American Enlightenment appeals to certain political truths as "self-evident," including the celebrated one about life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. This very appeal implies the methodological possibility of politics as a demonstrable or rational science. Such a possibility is closely related to the author of the *Essay*—not to Locke the empiricist in physics, of course, but to Locke the rationalist in ethics—who explicitly defends the demonstrability of ethical truths. Obviously, the implicit defense of the demonstrability of political truths in the *Declaration* goes together logically with the explicit defense of the demonstrability of ethical ones in the *Essay*.

6. The authors rest their case against Locke's influence on the political ideas of the American Revolution primarily on the ground that our "founding fathers were not philosophers but politicians." To address this argument in "Who Read John Locke?" a prior question is in order: Who was John Locke? In the first place, the Handlin article mistakenly assumes that Locke fits the traditional conception of the philosopher as a purely speculative mind. John Locke, the founder of British empiricism who "transformed traditional epistemology," admittedly is *not* a philosopher in the traditional sense precisely for the very reason that he did so. For the ultimate implication of his having trans-

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formed traditional epistemology is that he transformed the traditional interpretation of philosophy itself into an essentially pragmatic one by emphasizing in the *Essay* that our task in life is not to know all things, but those which concern our conduct. In the second place, even if we were to grant that Locke was not "the philosopher" of the American Revolution (1775–83), he *was* the philosopher of the English Revolution (1688) in one way or another. After all, Locke the Anglican Whig served for years as adviser to the First Earl of Shaftesbury (Anthony Ashley Cooper) the leading Whig politician in Restoration England. In short, John Locke was no armchair philosopher.

7. The Handlins contend that the motives that moved the rebellious colonists were "products of their native soil." True enough, except that their contention puts the emphasis, in the transmission of ideas, on the adaptive phase of acculturation at the expense of its assimilative one. If, in turn, the motives of the authors are to inflate our national ego by emphasizing the American side of the two-sided story, they actually deflate it by insisting that our founding fathers were mere eclectics.

8. To get to the bottom of the entire matter at issue, the authors reinforce their challenging case against Locke's influential role in the American Revolution by warning that every instance of imputing influences of one thinker on another calls for caution in the field of historiography and the consequent need of tracing carefully the "demonstrable linkages" (if any) between the two thinkers. To be sure, caution certainly has its proper place in any field of inquiry, but all the caution in the world cannot change the tentative probabilistic nature of the interpretations that abound in the history of ideas. This is especially so with those interpretations involving causal questions of who influenced whom. All of which signifies that we must be exceedingly careful lest we forget that the causal search for "determinative" influences and "demonstrable linkages" in intellectual history presupposes optimistically more faith in its methodology than is warranted by the complex nature of its subject matter. Ironically, the fundamental fault with the article's clarion call for methodological caution in historiography is that the call itself is not cautious enough in the long run.

PATRICK ROMANELL
Department of Philosophy
University of Arizona
Tucson, Arizona

Oscar and Lilian Handlin in "Who Read John Locke?" may be right in asserting that few colonial Americans "plodded through" Locke's *Second Treatise of Government*. But is it not misleading to ignore the impact of Locke's thinking conveyed in that immensely popular political slogan "Life, Liberty, and Property," heard everywhere in the English-speaking world of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries?

Surely Locke had much to do with the acceptance of "Property" as the third member of that trinity. There had floated around the Western world the notion that the earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof, and that its fruits belong to all His creatures in common. The notion was challenged at the time of the Reformation, if not earlier: the Thirty-Eighth Article of Religion of the Church of England, promulgated in 1562, declares, "The Riches and Goods of Christians are not common, as touching the right, title, and possession of the same, as certain Anabaptists"—the Münster communists—"do falsely boast." But it was Locke who, in chapter 5 of the *Second Treatise*, provided the most plausible and memorable rationale for the sanctity of property. The Lord may have created the earth for all to share in. But He attached a first-come, first-served proviso: when an individual expends his labor (or, later, capital) in developing a natural resource, it becomes his own—*proprius*—for him to do what he likes with. At one point (chapter 9) Locke calls "by the general name, property" men's "lives, liberties, and estates," and declares, "The great and chief end . . . of men's putting themselves under government is the preservation of their property." But in most of the treatise it is clear that "property" refers to their estates, their material possessions.

The thesis had enormous appeal to the energetic, expanding, acquisitive English-speaking societies of the two centuries after Locke. The enjoyment of property becomes inseparable from the second member of the trinity, "Liberty." In 1704, Joseph Addison, later Secretary of State in a Whig administration, apostrophized the freedom and affluence of his native land:

> O Liberty . . .
> Eternal pleasures in thy presence reign
> And smiling Plenty leads thy wanton train. . . .

James Thomson's "Rule, Britannia, rule the waves, / Britons never will be slaves" hymns an important attribute of Britannia: "To thee belongs the rural reign, / Thy cities shall with commerce shine." William Whitehead, poet laureate to King George III, dedicates his official ditties:

> Sacred to thee,
> O Commerce, daughter of sweet Liberty,
> Shall flow the annual strain.

Many other such celebrations of the conjunction of liberty and material prosperity are quoted in my essay " 'Sweet Land of Liberty' " in *The American Revolution and Eighteenth-Century Culture* (edited by Paul J. Korshin, AMS Press, 1986).

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Yet by the middle of the century a certain element of cant in the slogan was detected. Samuel Johnson (not the American one cited by the Handlins) wondered whether, as was claimed, British "liberty" and its concomitant prosperity, in contrast to French absolutism and poverty, were responsible for the bravery of the British common soldiers in the Seven Years' War. "Property they are commonly without," he wrote. "Liberty is, to the lowest rank of every nation, little more than the choice of working or starving"—later a familiar Marxist apothegm. Goldsmith tells the story of a "poor fellow" whom he met "begging at one of the outlets of London, with a wooden leg." Born in poverty, brought up in the workhouse, jailed for accidentally killing a hare (the "property" of some landowner), transported to the colonies as an indentured serf, impressed into the army, wounded and imprisoned in France, at last discharged from the army crippled and penniless, he remains the most fervent of patriots: "O liberty, liberty, liberty! That is the property of every Englishman, and I will die in its defence. . . . I hate the French because they are all slaves, and wear wooden shoes"—the affluent English working class wore leather ones. "I will for ever love liberty and Old England, liberty, property, and Old England for ever, huzza!" At British elections the cry was sometimes heard of "*No* 'Liberty and Property' men!"

The libertarian/propertarian rhetoric passed easily to the transatlantic English-speaking community. Jefferson—of whom Johnson inquired, "How is it that we hear the loudest yelps for liberty from the drivers of Negroes?"—euphemized the slogan in his "unalienable rights" of "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness"—happiness, Addison's "eternal pleasures," being presumably closely connected with the possession of property. Although Jefferson, the Handlins tell us, "hoped for the elimination of the institution [slavery] with time," meanwhile the labor of his bondservants assisted him in his pursuit of happiness at Monticello. "*Libertas*," as much revered in ancient Rome as in modern America, "is a convenient term of political fraud": so writes Sir Ronald Syme (*The Roman Revolution,* Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1952). "*Libertas* was most commonly invoked in defence of the existing order by individuals or classes in enjoyment of power and wealth. The *libertas* of the Roman aristocrat meant the rule of a class and the perpetuation of privilege. . . . Nobody ever sought power for himself and the enslavement of others without invoking *libertas*. . . ." "O Liberty! What crimes are committed in thy name!" cried a victim of still another libertarian revolution.

Locke, as the Handlins point out, treats the subject of slavery gingerly. But Americans had no doubt that their slaves were their property, and any infringement of their right to their absolute control over these chattels was as heinous as infringement of their right to life and liberty. Inveighing against Johnson's championship of abolition of slavery—"No man," he wrote, "is by nature the property of another"—James Boswell ranted, "To abolish a status which in all ages *God* has sanctioned, would . . . be *robbery* to an innumerable class of our fellow-subjects." The constant complaint of the South against efforts by Northerners to alleviate the oppression of the blacks was that they unconstitutionally violated the slave-owners' property rights.

Jefferson notwithstanding, the original formula was reinstated in the Fifth Amendment, 1791: no person in a criminal trial "shall be deprived of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law," and in the Fourteenth, 1868: "nor shall any State deprive any person of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law." "In the last decade of the nineteenth century," writes Richard Kluger in *Simple Justice* (Knopf, 1976), "the Supreme Court began taking an expansive view of the words 'liberty' and 'property.' . . . 'Property' was held to mean not only realty or personal possessions but ownership of any business or enterprise. 'Liberty' was held to include 'freedom of contract' by employers." Well into the 1930s, the majority on the Court used the Fourteenth Amendment to throw out legislation intended to establish some sort of equitable governmental control over the public dealings of corporations.

The thought of large uncultivated tracts of America waiting for the developer seems to have been a special concern of Locke's. He refers to America in six of the twenty-seven paragraphs of his chapter "On Property," and to its "wild Indians" in another two. He at least takes cognizance of the existence of the latter, which is more than the Handlins do; they praise the European newcomers for making "the most of the opportunities provided by nature—the vast unoccupied spaces at the edge of their settlements." They seem unaware that those spaces had been occupied for millennia by Algonquins, Iroquois, Cherokees, and their ancestors, deriving their living from them; those occupiers have simply become non-persons. Though the Handlins deny Locke's influence on what was to happen in America, they clearly share his view about what should be done with it.

Locke concedes the presence of human beings in these spaces. But he strongly disapproves of their holding them in tribal community. They are "rich in land and poor in all the comforts of life." They "have not the hundredth part of the conveniences we enjoy, and a king of a large and fruitful territory there feeds, lodges, and is clad worse than a day laborer in England." From what we read of the quality of life of English day laborers in Locke's time, we may be permitted to doubt the last statement. In any case, tastes in "conveniences" may differ, and it is just possible that an Iroquois chief might not have enjoyed being fed, lodged, and

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clothed in the manner of Louis XIV, or even of John Locke at Christ Church, Oxford. The Indian way of life is positively blasphemous, Locke thinks: "It cannot be supposed that "He [God] meant it [the American continent] should always remain common and uncultivated"; though He had allowed it to remain so for thousands of years, in 1690 He changed His mind and proclaimed, through His prophet Locke, that He now wished it to be given over to the developers. (To be sure, in the Old Testament, God had announced that He wished what is now Israel to be "developed"—"Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill made low; the crooked straight and the rough places plain." One can almost see the bulldozers in action.)

"As much land as a man tills, plants, improves, cultivates, and can use the product of," writes Locke, "so much is his property." The Indians therefore were propertyless, and the Handlins do right to ignore their existence. The common hunting and fishing grounds, the home of self-replenishing herds of deer and buffalo, should, as in England, be "improved" by being cut up into smallholdings and appropriated to industrious English colonists, who will eliminate the buffalo and deer (and Indians), fell the trees, dam fish-bearing streams, plough and harrow the soil, ruthlessly mine its limited underground resources, and generally insult the environment, which from time to time may avenge itself by turning vast tracts into dust bowls and heaps of slag, rendering them truly unoccupiable. "Opportunities provided by nature"—opportunities for what? For tens of millions, where native Americans once lived, to enjoy the comfort and convenience of watching soap opera several hours each day on individually owned television sets? Could Locke have possibly understood the motives of modern organizations dedicated to rescuing what is left of the natural ecology of this continent from private ownership and preserving it for the common enjoyment of its inhabitants?

From time to time the fundamental Lockean thesis has been challenged—by Proudhon ("Property is theft") and Marx; more recently by C. B. Macpherson in *The Political Theory of Possessive Individualism: Hobbes to Locke* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1962). Something of the old spirit is sometimes detectable in current political debate when the subject of raising taxes comes up, and there is a recrudescence of the post-Lockean Whig theory that unrestricted freedom to amass property will result in a happy and prosperous society at all levels—the "trickle-down" effect. But libertarian/propertarian dogma is not now as prevalent in the judgments of the Supreme Court as in the days of Justices Sutherland, McReynolds, and Van Devanter. Even the *Reader's Digest*, not noted for its radicalism, recently denounced the takeover of a lumbering company by an entrepreneur intent on cutting down at least 150 ancient redwood trees a day—an action that would have been applauded by Locke as adding to the "comforts of life" enjoyed by the stockholders. Perhaps the sanctification of property did not come from a reading of Locke, though he gave it splendid support. Perhaps, as the Handlins write, "Some happy but fortuitous junction brought words and acts together." But wherever it came from, it has surely had a profound effect on American life in the last three and a half centuries.

DONALD GREENE
Los Angeles, California

I am writing about the Handlins' "Who Read John Locke?" that appeared in the Autumn 1989 SCHOLAR. It is quite possible that few colonial Americans ever "plodded through" the entire *Two Treatises on Government* but incautious to conclude that therefore the work in question went entirely unread. I have just been looking at a trenchant abridgement of the *Two Treatises* that appeared in the *Bibliotheque Historique et Universelle* (December 1690) XIX, 559–91. Locke wrote for this journal, and its editor Jean LeClerc did everything in his power to make Locke's works known to his far-flung subscribers. In a pertinent article, "The Transatlantic Republic of Letters" (*William and Mary Quarterly*, 1976), Norman Fiering pointed out that LeClerc's journal was assigned special importance by colonial readers.

Of course the issue of intellectual influence is highly problematic. (Obviously few readers have plodded through all of *Das Kapital* compared to the number that have one way or another been "influenced" by the doctrines contained therein.) Recent work on discursive practices and conceptual change point to more sophisticated ways of handling the sort of question the Handlins have raised. This letter is aimed only at reasserting the simple point made by Fiering more than a decade ago: the cosmopolitan review journals (which were incidentally also issued in English versions) found their way into numerous eighteenth-century American college libraries and private collections. They need to be taken into consideration by anyone concerned with the reception of John Locke in the colonies.

ELIZABETH L. EISENSTEIN
Washington, D.C.

OSCAR and LILIAN HANDLIN reply: We agree that the journals ought to be taken into consideration, along with numerous other compendia in which Locke's name cropped up. But that consideration requires two steps: first an analysis of what the abridgement in the *Bibliotheque* included and what it omitted; and then a demonstration that any American read those passages. Absent such a consideration, we remain unconvinced.

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Minority Faculty Hiring

John H. Bunzel's article "Minority Faculty Hiring" (Winter 1990) is an unfortunately typical post–Reagan-era argument against affirmative action, using the "it won't work here" line of reasoning. Despite his claim that colleges and universities and their faculties and staff support the concept of equal employment opportunity, the author takes great pains to tell us that these institutions should be exempt from any stringent requirements to comply with EEO laws and directives.

Bunzel begins his attack on equal opportunity in the university workplace by discussing a special government order, later withdrawn, which stated that colleges and universities needed to give priority to women and minority candidates, and that the institutions could not demand higher qualifications of new applicants than those possessed by incumbents. Bunzel reveals that political pressure was brought to bear on this "radical" proposal: past hiring criteria were to have been the standard for current hiring decisions, as an operational starting point in an effort to move toward affirmative action goals. He then goes on to decry the apparent unconcern of civil rights agencies regarding the academic qualifications of job applicants. He insists that the agencies' "egalitarian model" might be appropriate for a beer plant or an assembly line, but not for higher education, where the possession of a Ph.D. is a basic requirement.

As a union president and an equal employment opportunity advocate, I can assure Mr. Bunzel that some white males in beer plants and on assembly lines don't like affirmative action one bit, either. The recent wave of Supreme Court cases indicates that not only some employers, from fish-packing and electronic assembly plants to banks, fight affirmative action tooth and nail, but also some white male employees. Firefighters in Florida claim that affirmative action policies have been so aggressive that many of the black firefighters hired there are not qualified. Bunzel insists that aggressive (i.e., formal, planned) affirmative action in the higher education workplace will result in unqualified employees, as if a Ph.D. were as vital a prerequisite to teaching as an M.D. is to doctoring. This argument is easy to lay aside, as there are always more qualified applicants for faculty positions than there are positions, as any young Ph.D., of any color, can tell you.

The issue is not really qualifications, or the declining number of black Ph.D.'s; the issue is a commitment to fairness. To quote Bunzel, "What one person gains under affirmative action may well be taken away from someone else." Here he reveals his true posture toward equal opportunity: I've got mine, you may scramble to get yours as best as you can. He devotes many pages to describe the academic deficiencies of blacks at all grade levels, and does not once mention that we as a society spend more education dollars on white suburban children than we do on minority urban and rural children. He compares the educational failure rates of blacks to other minorities, as if this were a contest between people of color (with almost no mention of women as a minority group), and with the few winners, mostly Asian, earning the right after overcoming almost insurmountable odds to join the white males in higher education employment.

Bunzel makes no mention of the Reagan administration's dislike for equal employment opportunity, of the underfunding of the civil rights agencies, and the appointments to those agencies of people actively opposed to affirmative action. He does not refer to the change in financial aid for college students under Reagan, where a primarily grant-oriented program was turned into a loan program, resulting in a declining minority enrollment over the last few years.

Affirmative action has no meaning unless there are measurable results. Goals and timetables are needed to restate policy in a proactive way, the policy being to open the process generally and to overcome deficiencies. "Deficiencies" are apparent today because selective hiring has been going on for generations. It is obvious that in the past, to be hired one did not only have to be educationally qualified and white, one had to be able to write one's name in the snow. I refer Bunzel to another article in the Winter 1990 SCHOLAR, "Bernard Malamud in Oregon" by Suzanne Clark, where she describes his coming to work at a college: "Malamud . . . arrived in Corvallis in 1949 when the English department was recruiting composition instructors to staff the positions that had been held largely by women during the war."

One wonders what happened to these women. Did they return dutifully to the typing pool, or were they justly angered by the unfairness of it all? This certainly puts a special light on Bunzel's insistence on "the principle of individual merit and accomplishment that is central to the integrity of higher education."

Bunzel also states, "The real but unstated [*sic*] aim of many affirmative action programs has been to bring about a dramatic equalization of conditions for certain groups through *preferential hiring* (italics mine) and proportional representation."

I say, it's about time.

MERILEE JAMIESON
President, AFSCME Local 1684
Eureka, California

JOHN H. BUNZEL replies: As I began Merilee Jamieson's letter, I found a groundless assertion and a factual error in the first two sentences. Still, I decided to read on. I made the wrong decision. The

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next paragraph begins with another error. My article did not make (as she claims) an "attack on equal opportunity in the university workplace." My main concern was to reaffirm the core values of equal opportunity, and to warn against the quota mentality of those affirmative action programs that would sacrifice high standards simply for racial "representation" or "body count" thinking.

Things get worse in Ms. Jamieson's letter. When I wrote that "What one person gains under affirmative action may well be taken away from someone else"—which, I must say, is neither very original nor controversial—she tortures my meaning by suggesting that what I really mean by equal opportunity is (in her words) "I've got mine, you may scramble to get yours as best you can." I've never run into such a foolish description of equal opportunity before. It certainly isn't mine.

Enough. Ms. Jamieson's whole letter calls to mind a comment once made by Samuel Butler: "I don't mind lying, but I hate inaccuracy."

The differences between us are fundamental. She states that "affirmative action doesn't mean anything unless there are measurable results." But Ms. Jamieson favors an equality of "forced results," whereas I support policies and programs of equal opportunity where the results are neither forced nor predetermined. She favors racially preferential hiring—"it's about time," she says—whereas I oppose a straight racial line for making faculty appointments not only because race or sex or color are inappropriate tests of academic competence, but because such preference undermines the fundamental principle of individual merit and accomplishment that is central to the integrity of any self-respecting college or university.

Finally, I wish to point out to Ms. Jamieson that when she says "it's about time" for preferential hiring and proportional representation in faculty hiring, and that this is what affirmative action should be all about, her quarrel is not with me alone. Many years ago Bernice Sandler, director of the Project on the Status and Education of Women and a vigorous advocate of affirmative action, made clear why blacks should not be hired simply because they are blacks or women because they are women. "No institution is required to hire women or minorities on the basis of sexual or racial preference," she said. "To do so would be clearly illegal. Affirmative action is not aimed at creating preference but at ending preference for white males which has always existed in academia."

I agree on all counts.

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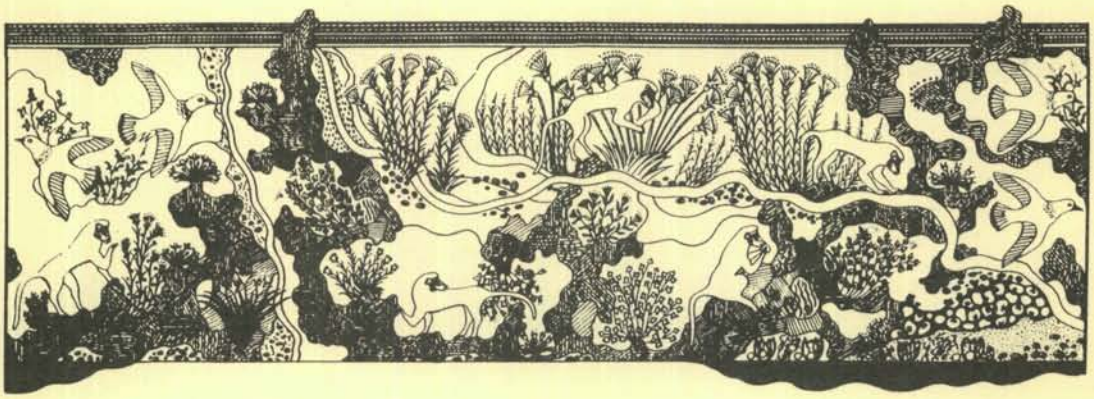

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